12-1-2019

Mission in the Margins: An Emplaced Missional Ecclesiology for the Brazilian Church in Urban Environments

Samuel Fuhrmann
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, fuhrmanns@csl.edu

MISSION IN THE MARGINS: AN EMPLACED MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY FOR THE BRAZILIAN CHURCH IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Samuel Reduss Fuhrmann
December, 2019

Approved by:	Dr. David R. Schmitt	Dissertation Advisor
	Dr. Mark D. Rockenbach	Reader
	Dr. Charles P. Arand	Reader

To my wife Vivian and my daughter Livia

[The IELB's motto, *Cristo Para Todos* ("Christ for All")] points to the mercy of God in Christ reaching out to all people indistinctly, crossing cultural, social and geographic boundaries.—Leonardo Neitzel

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to a number of people who have been instrumental in bringing this dissertation to completion. Some, however, deserve special mention:

My advisor, Rev. Dr. David R. Schmitt, for all the encouragement, critical comments and guiding questions throughout the dissertation writing process. I am deeply indebted to him. The Director of the Graduate School, Dr. Beth Hoeltke, for the encouraging words motivating me to work harder and finish the dissertation. Also my readers deserve mention here. I appreciated Dr. Charles Arand's and Dr. Mark D. Rockenbach's words in support of my project and significant observations to strengthen it at the beginning of the writing process. I also appreciated Dr. Anthony Cook's insightful conversations for the elaboration of my prospectus.

A Congregação da Paz de Interlagos, onde eu sirvo como pastor, também merece menção aqui. A congregação sempre apoiou meus estudos, até mesmo concedendo um mês de licença parcial para que eu pudesse concluir esta tese. Sou muito grato à Congregação da Paz por isso!

A minha mãe, Sra. Marlene Reduss, também merece ser lembrada. Ela até aprendeu a operar o computador, chegando a obter contas no Skype e no Facebook para se comunicar com a gente. Ela nunca deixou de me lembrar que Deus estava no controle e que me daria forças nas dificuldades. Minha mãe estava certa! Sou muito grato por seu amor, apoio e orações!

Finally, I am thankful for my daughter Livia and my wife Vivian, who deserve the most credit. My daughter's daily invitation to play outside was a strong source of motivation to finish my work and spend more quality time with her. As with my wife, she has always been very supportive. "Samuel, don't give up! You can do this!"—she said to me a few times. Both Livia and Vivian have always helped me see God's blessings through their love and care, even in times of stress. The service and love of all these people have helped me complete this dissertation.

ABBREVIATIONS

IELB	The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil
IECLB	The Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil
LCMS	The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LW	*Luther's Works,* American Edition (St. Louis: Concordia; Philadelphia: Fortress; 1955–1986)
WW I	World War I
WW II	World War II
SC	Small Catechism
LC	Large Catechism

ABSTRACT

Fuhrmann, Samuel Reduss. “Mission in the Margins: An Emplaced Missional Ecclesiology for the Brazilian Church in Urban Environments.” Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2019. 217 pp.

As the church tries to engage in God’s mission in Brazilian metropolises, it needs to account for the reality of the *favelas*. *Favela* is a housing category that refers to an urban built environment where one encounters a rich social, cultural, and spatial diversity, and often the problems of violence and poverty, all of which configure a challenge to the church. How does the church understand this reality? How does urban missional ecclesiology account for and respond to the complexities of *favelas*?

This dissertation analyzes both this reality and the mission history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil to reveal the importance of advancing the urban missiology of the Lutheran church in order to account for this reality. In addition, the dissertation engages in revised correlational conversation with a theology of place, bringing together this theology and an integrated view of Martin Luther’s theology for the purpose of offering a model of congregational engagement in the city that accounts for the reality of the *favelas.*

The dissertation is structured according to the “four tasks of practical theology” proposed by Richard R. Osmer, carrying out each task by engaging in bibliographic research.

CHAPTER ONE

FAVELAS AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL REALITY OF BRAZILIAN METROPOLISES

Introduction

During the second half of the twentieth century, massive urbanization in Brazil led to the increase of *favelas*. This increase has posed challenges to the church as it reflects on and engages in God's mission in Brazilian cities. How do we understand *favelas*? In what ways should the church relate with those who are not Christians and still share a common city and neighborhood? How can we engage the Brazilian urban context in mission? In essence, how does urban missional ecclesiology[1] account for and respond to the complexities of *favelas*?

Pastors and Lutheran scholars of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB) have perceived some of these challenges and recognize the need for more work when it comes to the church's life in the city. While the need is great, little has been said about how Lutherans can have an engaged presence in Brazilian cities, accounting for the reality of *favelas* in both Lutheran ecclesiology and missiology.

The Thesis

This dissertation will engage in revised correlational conversation with a theology of place to propose a model of ecclesial urban engagement in mission in the city and will apply this model to the Brazilian urban reality of *favelas*. In order to do this, the dissertation will examine the physical and social reality of *favelas* and the missional practices of the Lutheran church in

[1] The use of the term "missional ecclesiology" here is in continuity with recent attempts in missiology which aim at overcoming the separation between church and mission (ecclesiology and missiology) that resulted from the modern missionary movement. To put it bluntly, therefore, this term refers to the 'church in mission.' To look at the missional ecclesiology of the Brazilian church, for instance, means to look at the church in mission in terms of practices and theological reflection.

urban Brazil. Then, after offering an overview of theologies of place and of the theology of the everyday built environment, I will articulate an integrated view of Luther's theology, showing how the relation between the two kinds of righteousness and its underlying creedal theology leads to a strong theology of presence and engagement in the world. This articulation will serve to enter into conversation with the theology of place and, as a result of the conversation, to articulate the ecclesial model of 'cruciform engaged presence in the city.' The emplaced missional ecclesiology that results from applying this model will enable the IELB to engage in mission in urban contexts, where *favelas* are an important part of the city. Ultimately, then, this dissertation will contribute to the urban missiology of the IELB in its participation in God's mission in urban Brazil, as the church preaches the gospel and works with others for meeting the creaturely needs of fellow urban dwellers.

A Brief Historical Overview of the Emergence and Increase of Favelas

At the turn of the nineteenth century, an urban built environment for sheltering impoverished people began to emerge at the slope of hills and riverbanks in Brazilian Southeastern metropolises. These living spaces called *favelas* have increased and spread throughout the country since then. Brazil's biggest metropolises serve as an example of this. Today, the city of São Paulo has about 12 million people, of which 1.2 million are *favela* dwellers. Additionally, the growth rate of *favelas* is higher than the growth of the rest of the city (2.2% each year in contrast to 1.9%, respectively).[2] The same phenomenon is happening in Rio de Janeiro, where there are 6.3 million people, and *favela* dwellers already make up 18% of the

[2] Ivanir Ferreira, "Estudo Mapeia Condições de Faveas em São Paulo," *Jornal da USP*, February 02, 2017. http://jornal.usp.br/ciencias/ciencias-humanas/estudo-mapeia-condicoes-das-favelas-em-sao-paulo/.

population.[3]

Since their inception, *favelas* have been perceived as a challenge to those who aim at understanding Brazilian metropolises. Part of this challenge resides in the fact that *favelas* entail a high diversity, both spatially and socially, which makes it hard to define them. In addition, recent scholarship has shown that another challenge to be overcome is the dualistic ways in which *favelas* and Brazilian society in general have been represented. Due to these challenges, this chapter will offer a brief historical overview of *favelas*, situate them within the social reality of Brazilian older metropolises and analyze their physical characteristics and cultural power. The purpose of this analysis is to depict the complexity of *favelas* in a more integrated, holistic way, and to demonstrate the need for careful representation and analysis when attempting to form an urban missiology for the IELB.

Many Brazilian scholars have already offered detailed historical accounts about the emergence, development, and increase of *favelas*.[4] What this section intends to show is that the perspective of place can enrich one's understanding of *favelas*, offering a little more nuanced reading of these developments for this dissertation. In doing this, I will show that both the first emergence of *favelas* as well as their increase came about from two place-related experiences—displacement and migration—faced by Brazilians who live there. These two experiences were for the most part the result of a more time-related phenomenon—the modernization of Brazilian society and cities. Unfortunately, the government's definition, popular views, and scholarly work on *favelas* tend to be dualistic in a way that neglects the spatial dimension of life. For this reason, it is important, first, to understand *favelas* from the lens of place so that one has a fuller and

[3] Licia do Prado Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela: Do Mito de Origem a favela.com* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 2005), 13.

[4] For a list of works on this topic, see Valladares' work, A *Invenção da Favela.*

richer awareness of this cultural context and, second, to have a theology of place that shapes the urban missiology of the Lutheran church in Brazil in order to address such a context.

Favelas have emerged in Brazilian Southeastern metropolises out of an experience of displacement for both former slaves and former soldiers. Brazilian scholar Alfredo de Queiroz Filho affirms that although the massive increase of *favelas* is related to urbanization and industrialization between 1950 and 1970, the origin of the phenomenon is usually situated at the turn of the nineteenth century, after the abolition of slavery.[5] The author recalls that the only freedom that the abolition in 1888 brought to slaves was the freedom to become "mobile," that is, to leave the farms, where many of them had lived and worked, without being hunted down. The new law, however, did not guarantee a place for them to dwell. The only option for many of them was to go to the cities, join a huge population of former urban slaves and impoverished immigrants and live in what Queiroz Filho calls "precarious urban habitations," the so called *cortiços* ("tenement" in English), the "seed of favelas."[6]

The tearing down of these "precarious urban habitations" in Rio de Janeiro created a situation of displacement that led to the emergence of *favelas.* These habitations were a solution to the urban housing crisis until 1890,[7] as they were the most accessible option for impoverished people in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Yet, already toward the end of the same decade, that "solution" came to be perceived as a problem, given the then new political-economic scenario.

[5] Alfredo Pereira de Queiroz Filho, "Sobre as Origens da Favela," *Mercator* 10, no. 23 (September/December 2011): 33–48.

[6] Queiroz Filho, "Sobre as Origens da Favela," 33–48. See also Renato Meirelles and Celso Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela* (São Paulo: Editora Gente, 2014), 41.

[7] The city of Rio de Janeiro has attracted people since at least the beginning of the 19th century, when the Portuguese court settled in that city. Being since then the home for many Brazilian wealthy people, household servants were always welcomed in the city, but not always there were jobs for everybody. In addition, toward the end of that same century, the population of the city doubled as a reflection of the growth of Brazilian population in general and because of a crisis in the agricultural system due to political developments of the time.

The decades following 1889, when Brazil became a Republic and politicians envisioned cities that would resemble European cities on Brazilian soil, these habitations came to be seen as a hindrance to their vision, which led to the tearing down of these living spaces. Brazilian scholar Sylvio dos Santos Val describes these developments as follows:

> Mainly Rio de Janeiro … received the biggest urban interventions at the dawn of the Republic, which would gradually remove the population from the center to the peripheries close to the hills. … The new oligarchies wanted to present a European capital, copying French architecture, Mecca of Western culture. Ample spaces for business, circulation and even leisure [were created] for the wealthiest ones. [8]

Excluded from this "modernizing scenario," *cortiço* dwellers saw their habitations being torn down[9] and, as a response to this situation of displacement, they ended up building a place to live at the slopes of the hills in Rio,[10] where they joined another group of people who were trying to overcome a similar situation, former soldiers of the Brazilian Army.

The situation faced by the former soldiers of the Brazilian Army also exemplifies how displacement led to the emergence of *favelas*. At least since the 1860s, the government would recruit soldiers from marginalized groups by promising rewards such as housing or land for those who enlisted—that was a promise of place. In 1866, for instance, a decree determined that slaves who were eligible for the Army would be set free and receive the given reward in exchange for their services.[11] The same was offered to incoming immigrants and other minority groups. Then,

[8] Sylvio dos Santos Val, "A Metrópole Brasileira: Origens e Perspectivas," *Perspectiva Sociológica* 4, no. 5 (2010): 9.

[9] Most scholars exemplify this point by mentioning the "urban reform" during the administration of Mayor Pereira Passos (1902–1906) called "tear-down reform," when most of the *cortiços* were destroyed, along with other, older public places. Val, "A Metrópole Brasileira," 1–13. See also Queiroz Filho, "Sobre as Origens da Favela," 33–48.

[10] This is also the opinion of Queiroz Filho, for whom the authorities' initiative to "eradicate *cortiços* gave rise to the occupation of the hills." Queiroz Filho, "Sobre as Origens da Favela," 33–48. See also Val, "A Metrópole Brasileira," 1–13.

[11] Queiroz Filho, "Sobre as Origens da Favela," 33–48.

after every period of military action due to internal conflicts or war,[12] contingents of soldiers (former combatants) would increase the population of the capital of the Republic (Rio de Janeiro), expecting to receive the promised reward. This increase in population increased the already existing housing crisis. In order to solve this crisis, military leaders authorized[13] those former soldiers to occupy the slopes of hills and build temporary shanties or shacks for shelter, which ended up becoming permanent shelter for them, since the government failed to fulfill their promise of place.

In light of this brief account, one could say that *favelas* have emerged as a response to a situation of displacement—a response which came from the people themselves—in order to provide shelter for them and their families. With time, these living spaces increased and developed, making *favelas* a very important physical and social reality of Brazilian older metropolises.[14] Ironically, although favelas arose out of a situation of displacement, place is not the lens that is often used to think about *favelas*. Instead, *favelas* have been understood through two different kinds of dualism: the social opposition of city and *favela* and the temporal opposition of traditional and modern.

[12] Queiroz Filho, "Sobre as Origens da Favela," 33–48.

[13] This is an important point made by the aforementioned Brazilian sociologist Licia do Prado Valladares—that the first "squatter settlements" in Rio were authorized by the military as a solution to the housing problem at stake toward the end of the nineteenth century. With time, though, given the way *favelas* came to be represented by intellectuals and politicians, they became an urban problem to be solved by the government. Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela,* 36–54.

[14] This dissertation focuses particularly on the metropolises of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, where scholars have been able to pinpoint the emergence of the first *favelas* of Brazil, more than a hundred years ago. Besides, it is in these metropolitan regions where the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (known by the acronym IELB) has found the biggest challenges in terms of mission work. Before attempting to understand some of these challenges (chapter II), it is important to situate *favelas* within the social reality of Brazilian metropolises and then to analyze their physical reality in order to avoid a limited approach to this urban phenomenon.

The Dualistic Understandings of *Favelas*

The social and the temporal dualisms are very closely related and yet still distinct. In terms of their similarities, both create a divide in the city and result in *favelas* either being erased from one's vision of the city or viewed as a problem to be eradicated. In terms of their distinctions, social dualism leads to a view that *favelas* are the *locus* of poverty and violence, while the temporal dualism sees them as representing a retrograde past and a hindrance to urban progress. The former has been identified by recent scholarship in the predominant representations of *favelas*, while the latter results from a close analysis of these representations through the lens of place.

Social Dualism: City vs. *Favelas*

If one desires to understand Brazilian cities and the reality of *favelas*, one needs to overcome the dualistic ways in which *favelas* have been represented. Lícia do Prado Valladares is the scholar who first pointed out this challenge explicitly. As a sociologist, Valladares has worked in Rio de Janeiro *favelas* since 1967, when she started doing field work in *Rocinha*, the largest *favela* of the country today (about 70,000 people). Already in 1974, she earned a doctorate in sociology from the University of *Toulouse*, France. Valladares describes her own academic trajectory as moving from a student of the phenomenon called *favela* to a student of the sociological work on *favelas.* In 2005, she updated and adapted her dissertation work into a book, where she documents the history of scholarship on the topic and includes the government's ways of defining *favelas*. The author proposes that predominant dualistic ways of understanding Brazilian society in general have been applied to how *favelas* are understood, which creates the binary opposition "city versus *favela*."[15]

[15] Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela,* 21.

Valladares offers many examples of descriptions of *favelas* in support of her point. One of them, from the beginning of the twentieth century, represents the government's understanding of *favelas* at the time. It is a detailed description of an average *favela* house given by Everaldo Backheuser, an "engineer-observer" who worked for the Brazilian government in the beginning of the twentieth century:

> The hill of the favella is steep and rugged; their slopes are close to river shores where a kind of marquetry arises, but the little huts are without hygiene, without light, without anything… they [the houses] are as tall as a man, have earthen floor, ripe walls combined with a meshed of mud, smashed cans and, juxtaposed, wood foils of crates; the roof has the same mixture of materials which are fixed to the structure and held by blocks of stones that lay on top so that the wind does not remove the pieces; internal divisions poorly done, not finished as if their only purpose were to subdivide the soil… This is a pale idea of what these little caves are, where any notion of hygiene is lacking; there is also a lack of water, almost absolute lack, even to drink and cook.[16]

In this description, notice how *favelas* are described through a language of absence. The observer sees what they lack in contrast to the city. They lack hygiene and water. They lack purpose in their configuration. They lack qualities that would be conducive to what others identify as civilization, such as a finished structure or a place one could cook.

In Valladares' narrative, these words exemplify what she identifies as one of the very first ways of representing *favelas*, a way which became predominant from the 1920s on. The fact that Backheuser sees *favelas* as "without hygiene" and lacking water, along with other aspects of his description, situated *favelas* within the catalogue of "anti-hygienic habitations," like the *cortiços* once were before being torn down by the government. For Valladares, this kind of description led to the "problematization" of *favelas* as one of the "ailments of the city."[17] From this perspective, *favelas* would propagate diseases and be the

[16] Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela*, 37.

[17] Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela*, 39, 41.

cause of urban epidemics. Besides this "hygienist diagnosis," Valladares continues, accounts like Backheuser's served what she calls the "aesthetic approach" to *favelas*, a perspective from which *favelas* came to be described in terms of the "leper of aesthetics,"[18] as they supposedly lacked all the qualities which would constitute beauty. Both aspects would lead to the understanding that *favelas* were a hindrance or even a threat to the modernization of Rio de Janeiro after the model of European cities. The consequence of all this is that a hardened contrast was created between *favelas* and an idealized city, with the result that *favelas* were perceived as a problem to be eradicated by the government's actions.

Following the trajectory initiated by Valladares, a group of scholars led by a non-profit organization called *Observatório de Favelas* ("Observatory of *Favelas*") have discussed understandings of this kind and concluded that to stress a strong contrast between *favela* and the rest of the city has at least two consequences. The first is that *favelas* are defined on the basis of what they lack only, in terms of what is absent in them, and the second is that these living spaces are seen as a homogeneous reality, which erases their distinct characteristics.

Let us first look at the first consequence. For the *Observatório de Favelas* "the paradigmatic axis of representation of favelas is absence. In this perspective, favela is defined by what it might not be, by what it might not have."[19] This is exactly what the quotes above do. By contrasting *favelas* to an idealized vision of the city, *favelas* are defined as a built space where there is lack of good construction material, lack of water,

[18] Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela*, 42.

[19] Jailson de Souza e Silva, and Jorge Luiz Barbosa, Mariane de Oliveira Biteti, Fernando Lanis Fernandes, eds., *O Que é a Favela, Afinal?* (Rio de Janeiro: Observatório de Favelas, 2009), 16.

lack of hygiene, lack of legality, and even lack of civility among their dwellers. The organization has also called attention to the fact that today's government's definition of *favelas* follows the same pattern. For the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistic (IBGE), *favela* is a housing category that fits into what is called "sub-normal agglomerated" ("aglomerado subnormal"). Some of its characteristics are (1) the absence of property title or title deed [which is related to irregular occupation of land] along with one of the following features: irregular running paths [in terms of space for circulation] and/or deficiency of basic public services (such as garbage collection, sewer system, water network, electricity and street lighting). Besides, to be considered as a subnormal agglomerated, the settlement needs to have 51 or more residencies.[20] While helpful to identify what society in general is referring to when people say the word "favela," the organization recognizes, it is still a definition that falls very short of accounting for the complexities of these living spaces. Besides, it is important to note that the very characteristics of the urban centers from which *favela* dwellers have been displaced or left out are the criteria to determine whether habitations are "sub-normal" or not, just like in the beginning of the twentieth century. By using 'absence' to define *favelas*, these descriptions cause *favelas* to become "an antithesis to a certain ideal of the city,"[21] the organization concludes.

The second consequence, closely related to the first, is that *favelas* come to be seen as a homogeneous reality. On the one hand, by looking at *favelas* as the opposite of an ideal metropolis, a *favela* becomes a problematic space dominated by lawlessness, bringing insecurity

[20] Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), accessed March 22, 2017, http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/presidencia/noticias/imprensa/ppts/00000015164811202013480105748802.pdf.

[21] Marcelo Baumann Burgos, "Favela e Luta pela Cidade: Esboço de um Argumento," in Silva, 52.

to the rest of the city. Another description from the 1920s documented by Valladares is very revealing in this regard:

> Devoid of any policing, [*favelas* are] freely built out of precarious materials, … extraneous to any government inspection, attractive to vagabonds, redoubt of *capoeira* practitioners, shelter for the burglar who brings insecurity and agitation to the four corners of the city by the multiplication of arm robbery and theft.[22]

By contrasting *favelas* with the city, the absence of the *favelas* can now be filled with the presence of all that is threatening to life in the city. Vagabonds and burglars populate *favelas* and their activities extend beyond *favelas* to destabilize the cities themselves. On the other hand, *favelas* are viewed as the space of the poor. In this view, as Valladares puts it, "a favela is the *locus* of poverty, the urban territory of the poor," which has resulted in political paternalistic approaches.[23]

Therefore, while paying some attention to the physical reality of *favelas*, the government's dualistic approach leads to a polarization between city and *favela* and results in a neglect of its distinctive qualities and in a homogenization of their dwellers.

This dualistic view that ends up in reductionism can be perceived also in popular Brazilian spatial metaphors. In Rio de Janeiro, two very common terms used to distinguish between *favela* dwellers and the rest of the city's inhabitants are "the people of the hill" and "the people of the asphalt." The 'hill' stands for the habitations, the narrow pathways for circulation, and the architecture of the houses, all of which designate that of which a *favela* consists. The 'asphalt' stands for the rest of the city. The "people of *favela*" are said to be members of "the community," while "people of the asphalt" are called "urban citizens." Besides, implicit in this metaphor is the generalized perception that while the former group "walks" the city, the latter "drives" through

[22] Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela*, 42.

[23] Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela*, 151.

the city.

In São Paulo, *favela* dwellers and inhabitants of other areas of the city are often distinguished as "the people of the periphery" and the "dwellers of central areas." In a book written by a "periphery poet," for instance, the author Sérgio Vaz describes his experience living in São Paulo in the 1980s, "on this side of the bridge." This is a reference to two bridges which would give access to more central areas of the city, where he would have to go (i.e., "on the other side of the bridge") in order to attend and participate in artistic activities involving theater in the city.[24] Vaz's words reflect how popular daily language conveys the social dualism through which Brazilian metropolises and *favelas* have been understood. In addition, the description of his experience also reveals a certain cultural absence in *favelas,* as some cultural activities such as those he lists were present only in more "central areas" of the city. Therefore, *favelas* have been stigmatized as lacking not only the physical characteristics of the city but also as lacking those cultural practices that are seen as representing life in the city.

These examples show how pervasive this dualistic view is. Not only has the government always had legalized definitions that either presuppose or reinforce a divide in the city on the basis of what *favelas* lack, but also the people who inhabit the city use this kind of language that results from—and at the same time reinforces—this dualistic view, a perspective through which *favelas* are seen as spaces of absence and their dwellers as a homogeneous community.

Temporal Dualism – Traditional vs. Modern

This dualistic understanding is very pervasive not only in the government's definitions and popular everyday language, as shown above, but also in scholarly work. Valladares' major focus

[24] Sérgio Vaz, *Cooperifa: Antropofagia Periférica* (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano Editora, 2008).

is the scholarly work on *favelas*, and so she offers examples for this point that goes from the early 1900s to the early 2000s. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will explore only the most important example she provides. A careful look at this example through the lens of place reveals that not separate but alongside the social dualism, there is also a temporal dualism underlying the predominant representations of *favelas.*

At the heart of Valladares' work is her analysis of a spatial metaphor used to represent Brazilian society in the past and applied to the understanding of *favelas—o sertão e o litoral* ("the hinterland and the coastline"). This expression is used by Brazilian writer and social theorist Euclides da Cunha in his 1902 classic work, *Os Sertões* ("The Hinterlands"). The *sertão* stands for the poor rural areas of Northeastern Brazil, where there was a lack of resources, and the people, called *sertanejos*, were thought to be retrograde and under-civilized. The *litoral* stands for the developed areas of the country, the then developing cities on the East coast, where people were said to be highly civilized and had abundance of resources at their disposal. Da Cunha used this distinction to describe an experience of war at which the Army of the Republic defeated a group of *sertanejos* led by a religious leader known as Antônio Conselheiro. This leader rejected submission to the government because he viewed the Brazilian republican system as representing a strong force in opposition to the Christian faith.[25] In this conflict, the *sertanejos* were the enemy, who opposed the Republic, whose capital was located at the *litoral*. That was called the *Gerra de Canudos* (Canudos War). It took place in the State of Bahia in between 1896 and 1897.

Now, the point at which all this comes to meet the topic at issue is the following: the very

[25] For more on this religious movement in English, see Celiane da Rocha Witt Vieira, *A Messianic-millenarian Movement in Brazil: Canudus/ BA 1893–1997* (master's thesis, Concordia Seminary, 2018).

first occupation of a hill for building a small shack for shelter in Rio de Janeiro was made by the very soldiers who had defeated the *sertanejos* and were now back in the Capital to receive the promised reward. During the war, the troops of the Republic had positioned themselves at the top of a hill from where they could spot the enemy, a hill where there was a plant called *favella.* This strategy helped the Brazilian Army win the war. Now, as the survivors returned to the capital, they started occupying an area in Rio which had a similar topography to that of Canudos. They built their shacks at the slope of the *Providência* Hill and started calling it the "Hill of Favela."[26]

This historical account along with the toponymy and symbolic meaning of the term *favela* have already been deeply explored by Brazilian scholars.[27] The relevance of this for the present dissertation is what Valladares calls "the myth of the origin" of *favelas*. In the author's argument, the only other place called *favela* that the people had ever heard about was the one described by Da Cunha in his work, where a hill of *favela* represented an opposition to the city (the *litoral*), and where there were shanties, all of which represented the supposed uncivilized life of their dwellers, the *sertanejos*. Now, Valladares continues, when a new built environment emerges on the slope of a hill in the Capital and is given the name *favela,* society sees that built environment as a threat to their beautiful city and to civilized life. In the words of Valladares:

> Favela belongs to the old, barbarous world, from which it is necessary to keep a distance in order to achieve civilization… As it was possible to observe, the duality *sertão versus litoral*—present in the discourse of the author of *Os Sertões* [Da

[26] Quiroz Filho, "Sobre as Origens da Favela," 33–48.

[27] Queiroz Filho lists a group of scholars on whom he bases his account. Some of these scholars, Queiroz Filho highlights, interpret this toponym not only as a way of honoring those who had fought and died in Canudos or because of the topographic similarities between the two places, but also as a symbolic statement. By naming the "Providência Hill" as the "Hill of Favela," those soldiers, and others who joined them, were making a statement of resistance to the injustice that was being done toward them. From that hill in Rio, they would be able to "spot" the "enemies." Besides, it would then be within the geographic boundaries of the city, though on the slope of a hill, that those who soon came to be called "favelados" (participle adjective) would "root" themselves.

> Cunha]—can be found in the first images [of Rio's *favelas*], which creates the opposition *favela versus city* [original emphasis].[28]

What Valladares is showing is that the kind of dichotomist lens present in Da Cunha's book, when applied to the reality of *favelas,* creates a divide in the city, a divide between built spaces and between people groups—a social-spatial divide.

In order to further explore the implication of this duality and interpretation through the critical lens of place, it is necessary to understand the underlying theory that pervades this dichotomist representation. The distinctions, separations, and descriptions of the two settings described above—*Sertão* versus *Litoral*, *favela* versus *cidade* ("city")—reflect what Brazilian Anthropologist Ruben George Oliven calls the "traditional-modern continuum" theory. Writing about urbanization and social change in Brazil, the author says that theories of modernization "operate with the dichotomist concepts—traditional and modern—that are considered as extreme opposites of a continuum,"[29] and are based on a view of time that implies evolution or progress, in a "linear succession."[30] To be traditional is considered to be living in the past, while to be modern is viewed as living in the present, an "hegemonic present" that is said to be achieved by societies when they resemble European culture in terms of life style and behavior. A traditional, "retrograde" society is characterized in terms of well-defined social roles, community based on family relations and geographic proximity, and religious practices along with values determined by what one receives from past generations. A modern society is defined in terms of rationality, anonymity, freedom, and secularization.[31] While the former is associated with the rural setting,

---

[28] Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela*, 36.

[29] Ruben George Oliven, *Urbanização e Mudança Social no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Scielo, 2010), chap. 2, Kindle.

[30] Oliven, *Urbanização e Mudança Social*, chap. 2.

[31] Oliven, *Urbanização e Mudança Social*, chap. 1. See also Ruben George Oliven, *Antropologia de Grupos Urbanos* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2007), 19–21.

the later implies an urban, industrial context.[32] As a lens to look at the urban reality of Brazilian metropolises, this theory creates a kind of divide in the city that situates its dwellers at different points of the continuum, placing some in the past while others are in the 'hegemonic present.' Although in 1902, when Da Cunha published his work, this theory had not yet been articulated exactly this way,[33] the linear, progressive view of time serving as the main lens to understand reality was already very pervasive among intellectuals and politicians in Brazil, who would look up to Northern hemisphere societies as a model they envisioned for the future of Brazil.

Going back to Backheuser's detailed description of a *favela* house, the term "little cave" reveals this very point. Implicit in the term is the view that a *favela* represents the opposite of civilization, something from a very distant past. The description presupposes a trajectory from a cave dwelling to a house dwelling, with the result that *favelas* and their dwellers are seen as a threat to urban progress.

The spatial implication of this theory, which Oliven leaves undeveloped, is that modernization as an ideal has an impact on the built environment. Space and place are made subordinate to time, in the sense that both natural and built environments are shaped or destroyed, if necessary, to accommodate the changes that progress requires. Going back to the urban interventions that led to the emergence of *favelas*, for instance, the government's ideal of

[32] Oliven lists these characteristics explicitly when he explores another closely related theory—the folk-urban continuum theory. The author identifies discontinuities and continuities between the two theories. The folk-urban continuum holds a pessimist view of the city and stresses the fragmentation of society as the result of urbanization, which will be discussed further shortly. The Traditional-modern continuum, on the other hand, celebrates the modern city as progress, and stresses the process of homogenization of society. But the two operate with the same progressive view of history. Their defenders forget, Oliven recalls, "that history is not constituted of a linear succession, but that it can be permeated by advances, recession and stagnations, and is impregnated with contradictions." Oliven, *Urbanização e Mudança Social*, chap. 2.

[33] This theory was formulated by North American anthropologist Robert Redfield as the result of his studies in Mexico in 1941. In anthropological studies this model fits in the so called "theories of contrast," as it contrasts the "characteristics of a non-urban society with those of an urban one." This is a strong characteristic of the "Chicago School" of urban studies whose major concern was to address what this school perceived as the "urban pathology." Oliven, *Antropologia de Grupos Urbanos*, 19.

Brazilian cities resembling European cities led to the tearing down of habitations, the building up of a new urban environment, and the displacement of those who once inhabited the area. The same process happened during the massive urbanization of Brazilian metropolises, as it will be seen shortly; part of the urban built environment would be torn down and rebuilt to match the qualities of the ideal city, welcoming what was envisioned as progress.

What this analysis shows is that underlying these predominant dualistic representations of society lies the predominance of time over space and a neglect of the latter. It goes beyond the scope of this dissertation to explore how this might inflect the sociological study of *favelas*. For the present purpose, the identification of this time-centered theory shows not only that the predominant dualistic representations create a divide in the city, which sociological work has already shown through the identification of social dualism, but that it also reduces one's understanding of *favelas* to the point that society no longer sees the importance of the spatial dimension of life in *favelas*. This neglect of space entails an inability to see the distinct physical and social characteristics of *favelas*, which has missiological consequences for the church.

The Consequences of These Dualisms for Urban Missiology

There are at least two consequences that flow from the dualistic vision described above. First, the church may develop an understanding of *favelas* that aligns with the dualistic representations that divide Brazilian cities and favor one side or the other. This seems to be the case as documented by the research of sociologist Christina Vital da Cunha. Noticing that historical Protestant Christianity does not have a strong presence in Rio's *favelas*, she relates this absence to the reality of violence and the sense of lawlessness felt in these living spaces. As part of her argument, she relates this absence of historical churches to the fact that most of the people feel safe only where the state is present through the police or where one can rely on safety

technology, which is usually not the case in *favelas*.[34] For the purpose of this dissertation, the question that could be asked at this point is this: is there a way of facing the fear of violence related to the absence of the state so that this does not become a hindrance to a Lutheran congregational presence in *favelas*? The next section, as part of my constructive argument, will speak to this point.

Second, when *favelas* are viewed as the space of poverty, their dwellers are considered as the mere object of the church's charity. For Valladares, this was one of the major approaches Catholics took to *favelas* until at least 1955. Until then, says the author, Catholics had taken a negative approach similar to the government's, as the Roman Catholic church saw *favelas* "as an evil to be eradicated," which led to the promotion of a "caritative and clientelist policy of social assistance…"[35] In these two cases, *favelas* are viewed as a homogeneous space of absence (i.e., the absence of governmental protection and wealth in contrast to the city) which erases their distinctive characteristics and internal diversity.

The distinctive qualities of *favelas* are either not seen or posited in opposition to the city because absence is the "axis of representation" in these dualistic approaches, and because their underlying theory is centered in time to the detriment of space. If the urban missiology of the church relies on such representations and theory in its understanding of Brazilian cities, its missiology will still for short of accounting for the complexity of *favelas*.

For this reason, it is important to use the lens of place as a means to gain an understanding that leads the church away from hardened dichotomizations that create a divide between city and *favela*. Instead, one wants to situate *favelas* within the social reality of Brazilian metropolises.

---

[34] Christina Vital da Cunha, *Oração de Traficante* (Rio Comprido: Editora Garamond, 2014).

[35] Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela*, 77, 8

When situated within Brazilian metropolises, *favelas* are not seen as an isolated and opposed social reality but rather as locations of high social diversity. Such diversity is mirrored in the physical reality of *favelas*, something that a dualistic approach of absence fails to see but that the lens of place is able to explore richly.

A Place-Oriented Reading of *Favelas*

As it will be shown in more detail in chapter III, the specific theology of place this dissertation will appropriate pays special attention to the physical built reality of cities, using a multidisciplinary approach to better understand the urban built environment, with the purpose of offering an integrated, holistic view of cities. This is to some extent what the remaining part of this chapter will do by situating *favelas* within the social reality of metropolises, by analyzing their physical, built environment, and by looking at them from the perspective of their dwellers.

Favelas as an Important Part of the Social Reality of Brazilian Older Metropolises

To view *favelas* as part of the social reality of Brazilian metropolises is important for this dissertation for at least two reasons. It is helpful to offer an integrated view of the city for the urban missiology of the church in a way that the distinctive qualities present in them are not erased. Also, it allows the church to reflect on *favelas* as cultural contexts where physical and social constructions interrelate. For this reason, this section will offer an account that situates the increase of *favelas* within larger social-political developments in Brazilian society and relate this increase to urban interventions that tore down, built and rebuilt the urban physical environment in Brazilian older metropolises.

A good starting point of such an account is a social phenomenon that took place in Brazil after the 1950s, which resulted in a large increase of these living spaces. This phenomenon was the massive migration to Brazilian older metropolises as the result of Brazil's change from being

a predominately rural to becoming a predominantly urban society. This massive migration began in the second half of the twentieth century, when government leaders were determined to change Brazilian society; Brazil was to become an urban society right away.

One major consequence of this massive urbanization was a surplus population in Brazilian metropolitan regions. From 1950 to 2010, the rate of the urban population in Brazil increased from 36.16 % to 84.36 %. In Southeastern Brazil, the rate increased from 47.55. % to 92.5 %.[36] Besides the regular rural-urban migration[37] that is characteristic of most kinds of urbanizations, the decades following WW II were marked also by an urban-urban migration,[38] as people who already lived in medium-sized cities (over 20,000 inhabitants in the 1950s) moved to metropolitan regions (at least 500,000 inhabitants in the same period).[39] These regions ended up having more people than their structures could accommodate; there was thus a lack of space for individuals to have their own places of habitation.[40]

Another major consequence of these developments is the so called "metropolitan

[36] Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), accessed March 22, 2017, http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/.

[37] This move to the city was the result of drastic and fast changes in the economic-political scenario in Brazil. These changes include what scholars call a "capitalist expansion" to the rural areas. Unlike previous periods in Brazilian history, by 1960, the "familiar polyculture" of small farmers or colonists gave way to big companies which, through high investments and modern machinery, would cultivate the soil and compete with the small farmers. Then, not being able to compete, these farmers would become impoverished, and would either work for these companies or migrate to the cities in the pursuit of a better life. Milton Santos, "Espaço e Sociedade no Brasil: A Urbanização Recente," *Geosul* 2, no. 5 (Fall 1988), 91.

[38] One of the reasons for this migration to metropolises was the job opportunities that the then new industrial economy created. Already in the early 1940s (in the "New Republic" period), the then president of Brazil, Getúlio Vargas, rejected the claim of a Brazilian "agrarian vocation" strongly held by conservative politicians. Vargas then proposed that Brazil should become industrialized and no longer import manufactured products and that for this change to happen Brazil would have to develop an "urban vocation." The realization of this ideal gained force when Europe had to interrupt its exporting during WW II. This created a gap in Brazil—since the country would import material from Europe until then—a gap which the new Brazilian industry started to fill. Oliven, *Urbanização e Mudança Social,* chap. 4.

[39] Santos, "Espaço e Sociedade no Brasil," 96.

[40] Oliven, *Urbanização e Mudança Social*, chap. 4.

phenomenon." This involves both the emergence of new metropolises and the adaptation of old ones to the then new social-economic ideals, causing an impact on how people lived and interacted in the city. Speaking of these adaptations in these metropolises, Brazilian critical geographer Milton Santos says that,

> Each time there is a modernity, it is adopted by the [Southeastern] region. The city of São Paulo is an example of this, for it constantly abandons the past—the city turns its back to it. And there is, in contrast, the fact that it builds a present in the image of the hegemonic present, which allowed this city, in all recent periods, an economic superiority. This also allows the Southeastern [region] to maintain the highest urban growth rate.[41]

Santos is talking about the spatial adaptations that required that part of the built environment in these urban centers was to be re-arranged or re-constructed. This was an ideal that brought technology in transportation, spatial mobility, and an architectural outlook that was meant to resemble European cities, as it had already happened in the previous attempts to modernize Brazilian cities. Like previous attempts, all of these qualities that cities would then have would benefit only part of the urban population.

From the 1950s onward, these urban interventions included both the adaptation of cities to the automobile and housing projects. Urban planner Ermínia Maricato recalls that the relative popularization of the automobile changed the built environment after WW II, although the majority of the population did not have access to a car. Due to the fact that the increase of cars circulating on the streets required more space for mobility, roads were enlarged and cities came to be projected or rebuilt with a concern no longer primarily oriented toward the human scale, but toward the automobile. An example of this can be seen in Santos' description of Brasília, the new capital of Brazil founded in 1960 that was intended to be a symbol of progress and a model

[41] Santos, "Espaço e Sociedade no Brasil," 85–100.

for other cities.[42] In Brasília, says the author, road traffic is facilitated by "5 lanes, being the central one reserved for highspeed. The traffic without intersections... favors speed and low cost."[43] This element and other aspects in Santo's description such as the zoning that separated the different parts of the city according to their functions and the enormous distances between them indicate that the then new city was welcoming those who could afford a car and that the urban built environment of older metropolises would be remodeled to serve only part of the urban population.

As with housing projects, there were interventions taking place at the heart of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, but these projects did not benefit all the surplus population that was migrating to the city. In a study about Brazilian metropolises, Maricato shows that in the 1960s the "apartment building" became the main form of housing for the urban middle-class dweller as the result of the government's initiative. She laments that housing programs, however, did not promote what she calls the "democratization of the access to land" in the urban setting.[44] The poor were relegated to inhabit the peripheries, usually occupying areas which were not under real-estate speculation, like the slopes of hills or riverbanks, massively increasing the already existing *favelas* or giving rise to new ones.

How does this all help one speak of *favelas* as localities of high social diversity within Brazilian metropolises? Considering all that has been said so far, one could say that a great part of *favela* dwellers today is made up of migrants. In fact, a recent study that points to the

[42] Santos explains the metropolitan phenomenon and argues that new metropolises would then answer the new economic requirements without adaptation. Santos, "Espaço e Sociedade no Brasil," 97.

[43] Milton Santos, "Brasilia, a Nova Capital Brasileira," *Caravelli CNRS Toulouse,* no. 3 (1964), 76.

[44] Ermínia Maricato, "Urbanismo na Periferia do Mundo Globalizado: Metrópoles Brasileiras," *São Paulo em Perspectiva* 14, no. 4, (Oct./Dec. 2001), http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0102-88392000000400004.

heterogeneity of *favelas* shows that 52% of *favela* dwellers in São Paulo are migrants from different regions of Brazil, most of them being from Northeastern Brazil. In Rio this number is 29%.[45] The same study also shows that the favela-diverse demography entails ethnic, cultural, religious, and economic diversity. While today (2014) 67% of *favela* dwellers are "black"[46] the rest consists of people who migrated to the cities from different regions of Brazil (Italian and German descendants included) during urbanization. In terms of religion, the majority of people in these urban spaces are Roman Catholics, Afro-Brazilian spiritists, and charismatic Pentecostals.

Another conclusion that one could come to is that *favela* is a space for the poor, the "*locus* of poverty," to recall Valladares' term, but this would be a mistake. Although Maricato could demonstrate that in the 1960s the "apartment building" becomes the living space of middle-class people while many of the poor had to go to the peripheries to live in *favelas*, recent studies have shown that this has changed. As will be discussed shortly, many *favelas* are spatially diverse because some of their dwellers can improve their shacks into places of habitation as they have the economic conditions to do so. This means then that *favelas* are economically diverse as well. Meirelles and Athayde recall that, when they did their research (2013), the percentage of middle-class *favela* dwellers was 65% of all dwellers, a number higher than the percentage that corresponded to the entire country's middle-class population (53%).[47] This economic diversity can be perceived by comparing different *favelas.* Some *favelas* still are very poor, while others, the older ones, have developed economically by both generating an internal economy and

[45] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 33.

[46] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 42.

[47] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 30.

engaging in the larger society's economy.[48]

All this shows that *favelas* are not homogeneous nor are they a parallel opposed reality to the rest of the city, as the dualistic understandings above postulate. They are a very important part of Brazilian metropolises with high social diversity that is reflected in their physical, built environment.

A Close Analysis of the Physical, Built Environment of *Favelas*

One of the articles published in the work of *Observatório de Favelas* is significant when considering the physical characteristics of today's *favelas.* For Brazilian scholar Rosani Denaldi

> after one century of favelas, many changes are perceived. The image of favela associated with a 'shanty' no longer corresponds to the reality of most favelas in metropolises. The squat, gradual or sudden, individual or in group, on a piece of land with no infrastructure followed by the self-construction of a house out of temporary material like wood, and hay, are no longer predominant characteristics… Favelas have become denser, verticalized, and a great amount of their habitations are built with bricklaying; the image of the shanty is replaced by the image of the bricks without plaster… It has been also observed that there is a spatial and social diversity: there are not only the poorest ones inhabiting favelas… Some studies have pointed to the fact that favelas are spatially and socially heterogeneous, and that they are not the only poor sectors of the city.[49]

In this portrayal of *favelas*, notice how the details about the density and verticalization of the construction and about the materials like bricklaying and plaster all highlight presence rather than absence; although this depiction does not match the characteristics of the idealized modern city, the presence of distinct characteristics is still valued along with an appreciation of *favelas*' social and spatial diversity.

---

[48] Meirelles and Athayde *Um País Chamado Favela*, 30, 42. For these authors, this shows that *favelas* should not primarily be seen as a *locus* of poverty, but as a place of community life, given that even when their dwellers grow economically they still stay in *favelas* and improve their habitations, often to create spaces for the celebration of community life, as it will be seen shortly.

[49] Rosana Denaldi, "Caracterização das Favelas no Âmbito dos Planos Locais de Habitação de Interesse Social (PLHIS)," in *Silva*, 62–3.

These physical characteristics identified by Denaldi are well captured and analyzed by scholar Paola Barenstein Jacques. She is an architect and urbanist who coordinates urban studies in the Federal University of Bahia. In an article entitled "Estética das Favelas" ("Aesthetics of Favelas"), Jacques analyzes these built spaces and proposes a conceptual lens through which one can understand what she calls the "spatial identity" of *favelas*. Speaking of the material out of which *favelas* are first built and of the process of construction, Jacques proposes the term "fragment" as a means to represent these aspects. According to Jacques, people first aim at having a space for shelter, and so they start building with fragments of material they find. Once this shelter is ready, what one can observe is a very precarious shanty or shack whose purpose is nothing other than having a roof over one's head, a shelter for the builder and his or her family. Once this shelter is done, "there lies a basis for a future evolution."[50] This way, once the person is able to afford adequate materials, he or she begins replacing the old fragments, enlarging and improving his or her "shack." Without a pre-established project, this work continues on and on to the point that where once there was a precarious shack for shelter, with time, there will be a bricklaying house as a permanent habitation. While these new (*favela*) houses no longer have precarious fragmented materials, observes the author, the construction is still fragmentary because its process never ends, and a new, non-projected extra room or bathroom is built-in if the owner can afford that. This never-ending process of building a place for living results in a "spatial diversity" within one single *favela* and among different ones.

This process is what creates the distinct "spatial diversity" (referred to by Denaldi) in comparison to other parts of the city. The "formal city," planned by the architect, usually implies

[50] Paola Berenstein Jacques, "Estética das Favelas," *Vitruvius* 2 (June 2001), http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/02.013/883.

"a rationalization of the construction and a simplification of space by models or modulations, that is, a repetition of the same, which does not occur in favelas where, given the absence of the notion of project, each shack is different from the other."[51] This way, while the projected city is, in general, homogeneous, *favelas* are very diverse in their spatial form. Interestingly, the very temporal duality (traditional-modern) that led to the displacement of people and the creation of *favelas* has created a homogeneous space in the city, while the *favelas* operate with a different temporal signature, building on rather than building new, and this cumulative development of place creates a heterogenous space in the *favelas*.

In further emphasizing this spatial distinction, Jacques affirms that while the architect projects a habitation envisioning the end or finished work, the self-constructor in a *favela* is worried about shelter, which makes of one's goal the achievement of a better shelter, and not a final form or goal. The difference between habitation and shelter, the author further explains, is a temporal one; the former is intended to last, while the latter is intended to be temporary (even if it lasts for one's entire life). The habitation is viewed as durable even if it is about to fall apart, while the shelter is always provisional, though it has the potential to become a permanent habitation. In conclusion to this point, the author concludes that

> between sheltering and inhabiting there is a spatial-temporal process completely different. It is as if architects spatialized time and the constructors of favelas temporalized space. This opposition is clear when one compares the form of conceiving the space of the architect—who starts with projects, spatial and formal projections for the nearby future—with the form of construction in favelas—where there is no pre-established project and the contour form of the future construction appears only when one really begins to build, and what is being constructed is never fixed or pre-defined as with a traditional project.[52]

[51] Jacques, "Estética das Favelas," *Vitruvius* 2 (June 2001), http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/02.013/883.

[52] Jacques, "Estética das Favelas," *Vitruvius* 2 (June 2001), http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/02.013/883.

The point here is not to highlight the distinction between traditional and vernacular architectures. The importance of Jacques' explanation resides in the fact that what she calls the "spatialization of time," practiced by traditional architects, realizes (or attempts to realize) the projected future by transforming the present environment, natural or built. This future-oriented mindset is not always something that a *favela* dweller holds, as he or she is concerned primarily with the basic needs of the present, and the future is more a matter of hope. A future oriented mindset has a spatial impact on an urban setting. If read through a dualistic lens, this could look like a thriving urban center that is opposed by a poor and dangerous perimeter. Such a reading, however, is misguided. As Jacques' research suggests, the diversity of the *favelas* does not arise from dangerous opposition to the urban center but from the dwellers' primary orientation toward the basic daily needs of life.

This analysis shows that to pay special attention to the physical, built environment of *favelas* without posing it in opposition to other urban built environments opens the possibility for understanding Brazilian metropolises in a way different from that which configures a binary opposition. Instead of viewing them as having primarily a dividing line that separates two realities—*favela* / city, or traditional / modern—through this analysis one is able to see the entire city as representing a high spatial diversity, of which *favelas* are an important part and reflect the social diversity present in them.

As a result, this kind of analysis exemplifies the possibility of a more holistic and integrated approach to these living spaces in particular, an approach which reveals their dwellers' strong orientation toward the present, daily needs of their families, which is reflected in the built environment; it is this ordinary concern which all people have that leads some to start building on riversides or slope of hills with precarious materials at first, and then to improve the shelter

according to their needs and economic conditions.

In addition to considering the individual shelter within a *favelas,* Jaques also considers how these shelters are connected to one another in a social network of space. For her, the spaces between the constructions in a *favela* form "alleys" that resemble a labyrinth or maze. This "labyrinthic urban process of *favelas,*"[53] like the constructions, is not planned or projected, but results from how individuals decide to occupy the land and build or enlarge their shacks and houses. As a result, the spaces for circulation may or may not be enough for the circulation of vehicles. The first major concern when one builds is to have enough space for people to walk.

As a result of such labyrinthic pathways, Jacques continues, as part of the distinct "spatial identity" of *favelas,* the spaces of circulation cannot be known by looking at a pre-conceived plan or a map. In order to get to know a *favela* one needs to walk the terrain or area and then trace a map if necessary, like the work of a cartographer, and the best way to do it, she advices her readers, is to have a guide to walk through the maze, a *favela* dweller who can help one visiting the *favela.* This point, therefore, has implications for how one can get to know a *favela* (and thus will receive more attention later).

Jacques also makes the important observation that the spaces between the constructions in *favelas* create a different perception about public and private spaces:

> in a favela, these spaces are also inextricably connected. During the day, the alleys become a continuation of the houses, semi-private spaces, as most of the houses have the doors open and become also semi-public spaces. The idea that favela is a big collective house is common among its dwellers. The alleys and pathways are almost always extremely narrow and, being intricated, they increase the labyrinthic sensation and lead to a great physical proximity that results in all kinds of mixtures.[54]

---

[53]Jacques, "Estética das Favelas," *Vitruvius* 2 (June 2001), http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/02.013/883.

[54] Jacques, "Estética das Favelas," *Vitruvius* 2 (June 2001), http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/02.013/883.

From this quote, it is important to stress that the labyrinthic shape of the spaces for circulation leads to a view of public and private that will be different from the view of those who live in another urban environment. In other parts of the city, there is a clearer differentiation between public and private spaces. Such a differentiation is important for a church to consider when engaging in mission. In a secular society, faith is often relegated to the private sphere of values in contrast to the public world of facts. Missiological endeavors that attend to this urban secular division of public life and private faith need to be reconsidered, however, when entering into the social and physical spaces of *favelas*. Here, the public and private division is much more ambiguous, resulting in a different way of expressing the faith in communal life and, consequently, creating the need for a different missiological approach when entering into and being part of such a community.

This close analysis of the built environment of *favelas* shows that one cannot speak reductively of *favelas* but rather needs to recognize their diverse social and physical characteristics. Such diversity cannot be erased by dualistic descriptions but rather needs to be embraced as meaningful to the people who live in *favelas* and as embodying ways of life that are the very means by which they overcome some of the challenges they face. To identify and understand the meaning of these distinct characteristics is an important step toward understanding Brazilian metropolises and *favelas* more fully for the missiology of the church.

Another Narrative about *Favelas*: The Inside Perspective and the Lens of Place

In order to give voice to the meaning of the physical and social spaces of *favelas*, one can turn to studies of those who dwell in *favelas*.[55] Here, one has a closer attention to both the voices

[55] Vital da Cunha's, *Oração de Traficante*, the work published by the *Observatório de Favelas*, and Meirelles', and Athayde's *Um País Chamado Favela* are examples of these studies.

of *favela* dwellers and the places in which they live. These studies bring together the important spatial and social characteristics of *favelas* mentioned above and the ways of life of those who dwell within them. Meirelles and Athayde, both former *favela* dwellers and people who are continuously engaged in them, observe this:

> For an external observer, *favela* might be the ugliest place in the world, disconnected, asymmetric, and devoid of formal aesthetics. However, it touches those who have lived their childhood there, those who received in a modest construction the first affections from his or her mom.[56]

Notice how there is another narrative and meaning to these spaces that arise from within them rather than from outside of them (by those who have displaced the very people who make up the *favelas*). External dualistic representations as exemplified above will not fully understand the social and spatial meaning of these spaces. For that, one can consider internal holistic representations. In considering such representations, I will organize the predominant qualities under relational, personal, and religious aspects, all of which reflect and are shaped by the built environment of *favelas*.

Perhaps the most significant characteristic of *favelas* is the relational culture and sense of cooperation cultivated by their dwellers. Speaking about the love and fidelity of *favela* dwellers toward the "place" where they live, Meyrelles and Athayde say that such sentiments are related to the strong social ties cultivated in *favelas.* In such places, one "almost always has someone on whom to count. There is somebody who can lend him money or a credit card in times of financial hardships. There is somebody else who can watch his kids while he works… The law of reciprocity is imperative in a favela."[57] As noted earlier, the spatial blurring of public and private spaces creates a stronger relational culture.

---

[56] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 153.

[57] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 31.

This relational culture is not only the result of living in *favelas* but arises in the very construction of them. Consider the observations of Oliven, in *Anthropology of Urban Groups*. Objecting to the view that the city necessarily fragments community life and leads to individualism by necessity, he mentions the experience of migrants to the city of São Paulo, where these people built their houses in the peripheries through *mutirões* ("popular joined efforts"). In these *mutirões*, groups of neighbors would come together to help one another, and the way to pay back for the help received would be to join the group again when another neighbor would need help.[58]

Strong ties of community are also strategically necessary to live in the midst of the violence related to drugs, which is also a reality of most *favelas.* In her sociological work, Vital da Cunha raised the question "What makes a *favela* dweller feel safe in the midst of constant violence?" In answering this question, she demonstrates that the relationships people have in *favelas* sometimes are the only thing that makes them feel safe.[59] While most of the people in Brazilian cities rely on the presence of the state through the police around their homes and workplace or on security technology, a *favela* dweller relies on the neighbor next door or a relative who lives close by. This makes one recall the advice given by Jacques that in order for one to get to know a *favela*, he or she needs to walk with a dweller to be able to get around. For Da Cunha, this walking with a resident of the *favela* is important not only for navigation but for safety matters (which she experienced during her emic research spending times in *favelas*). Anonymity is not something to be desired by anyone who decides to be present in *favelas*; instead, the cultivation of good relationships is of extreme importance.

[58] Oliven, *Antropologia de Grupos Urbanos*, 39.

[59] In her ethnographic research, Vital da Cunha found out that the state is usually either absent or perceived as bringing more violence to *favelas* as far as the police is concerned. Vital da Cunha, *Oração de Traficante*.

This relational culture is embodied in the architecture of some *favela* houses, those made of brick and concrete. Those who can afford this, usually build a terrace on the top of the second or third floor to have a nice space to socialize with friends and family.[60] In such spaces, they usually have a pot-luck and the traditional *churrasco* (Brazilian barbecue), while Brazilian music is played on the radio. This relational way of life in *favelas* can be also seen in the adaptations made on houses to accommodate more than one generation, which gives a sense of extended family and the perception that the past is never abandoned. The built environment of *favelas* is not part of the "hegemonic present," but it shows connection with the past. Meirelles and Athayde say, for instance, that a regular *favela* house "piles up time."[61] Taking a particular example of a *favela* in the city of São Paulo, they describe a house as follows,

> The ground floor is archaic, [because its style] is a thing of the 1980s, the work of the couple. There is a second floor, [with a] better workmanship, whose walls exhibit another type of brick, and a grouting very well done. [That] is the dimension [or space] of the children [of the couple]. In the turn of the century, however, the grandchildren also wanted some retreat and privacy. In the house which, like a tree, grew toward the skies, now there is a third floor. This one now has plaster on the walls; it is a manifestation of esteem and respect for the boys.[62]

This kind of description indicates that the built environment of *favelas* embodies the relational culture cultivated in these living urban spaces. It also exemplifies a point made by Jacques' architectural analysis about the upgrade of the residencies in *favelas* according to economic conditions and the necessity of offering better shelter for one's family. Here, in this description, the process Jacques describes in terms of "fragment" to refer to how houses are constructed happens for the purpose of accommodating more than one generation through the verticalization of the construction. The physical structure that arises then, with each floor representing one

[60] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 112.

[61] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 112.

[62] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 156.

generation, leads to the perception that *favela* "piles up time" and brings together past and present; it is viewed neither as a "retrograde past" nor is it a built environment that intends to abandon the past. It is perceived as integrating and holistic.

This relational culture is reflected not only in the residencies but also in the common spaces, the spaces in between the constructions. According to representatives of the *Observatório de Favelas,* one very important characteristic one finds in a *favela* is this: "neighborhood relationships marked by intense sociability, with a strong valorization of common spaces as place of co-living."[63] This to some extent goes back to the point made by Jacques again—that alleys in between the constructions become a continuation of the houses, functioning like semi-private spaces.

Listening to the observations of *favela* dwellers emphasizes not only a relational culture but also a personal bonding between individuals and their dwelling places. Consider the following observation of Meirelles and Athayde. Informed by humanist geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, they take a poetic approach to place and speak of *favela* houses and their dwellers as follows:

> In a *favela,* the residents remember of their adolescence by the smell of the wall of wood of the little bedroom; or perhaps by the texture of the floor of the bathroom. Man mingles himself with the environment and projects himself on it… The little blue house, elevated on the hill, has the face and a piece of the soul of José, who built it with his own hands, with the help of his wife and his older son.[64]

This kind of description highlights, first and foremost, the strong bond between the *favela* dweller and his or her place. This helps one understand why better economic conditions do not always lead the dwellers to move to another area of the city. They are invested in their place. Second, it shows that the spatial identity of *favelas* is not viewed as 'lacking the qualities that

[63] Silva, *O Que é a Favela, Afinal?,* 23.

[64] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela,* 153–54.

constitute beauty' from the perspective of their dwellers but is appreciated because it reflects the very characteristics of their residents. Not only does a *favela* house accommodate the different generations of an extended family and combine past and present in its spatial qualities but it is also perceived as reflecting the very qualities of their individual dwellers, showing how the social and the spatial realities are mingled together.

Finally, consider yet another characteristic of *favelas,* embodied in the built environment: their dwellers' public religious expressions. In her work, Da Cunha describes what she calls a "symbolic battle" for the built environment in two *favelas* of Rio. According to the sociologist, until the mid-1990s, the built environment had catholic and Afro-Brazilian spiritist religious built-in and painted symbols or images everywhere. From the late-1990s on, a replacement of symbols took place as charismatic Pentecostalism grew among *favela* dwellers. Where once there were Roman Catholic or Afro-spiritist symbols now there are Bible verses that affirm the lordship of Christ over all. She also shows that, for Pentecostal Christians who live in *favelas*, "the presence of the church has the transcending effect to transform the place from impure to blessed."[65] This conviction, then, leads many of these Christians to action, as they see themselves as agents of God sent to keep the kids away from the drug dealers.[66] These examples show that religion in *favelas* is not relegated to the private sphere, which is the basic condition for a secularized society, but is usually expressed publicly on the built environment or in public action toward the surrounding community.

All these aspects—relational, personal, and religious characteristics—along with the physical identity of *favelas* analyzed above, have implications for fully developing an urban

[65] Vital da Cunha, *Oração de Traficante*, 360.

[66] Vital da Cunha, *Oração de Traficante*, 122.

missiology that responds to the complexities of *favelas.*

Conclusion

The work of this dissertation is to develop an urban missiology for the Brazilian Lutheran church that accounts for *favelas*. To do that, it is necessary to work with an understanding of *favelas* that sees them in all of their physical and social complexity. Such a vision is not cultivated by using the dualistic representations described above that inform the larger society's view of *favelas*. If the church's understanding of the city is informed by such theory and representations, it will be difficult to develop a theological rationale or practices that in fact respond to the complexity of the Brazilian metropolis. The holistic, integrated perspective of the city offered above will aid in the development of an urban missional ecclesiology. In contributing to the urban missiology of the IELB, this dissertation will affirm that the church is not bound to one place nor limited to social-spatial divisions but is locally present wherever the gospel is preached. On account of this belief, Christians have the theological basis to foster a kind of presence in the city that counters the social-spatial divide that is present in contemporary Brazilian metropolises. Before considering how that is done, however, it will be helpful to examine how the Brazilian church has approached missional ecclesiology in the city. After all, missiology does not occur in a vacuum but is part of the on-going life of the church.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY OF THE IELB AND THE CHURCH'S RECENT ATTEMPT TO FORM AN URBAN MISSIOLOGY

Introduction

The missional thinking and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil has recently attempted to answer the challenges of Brazilian cities as far as mission is concerned. Unfortunately, the answers offered so far still do not account for the reality of Brazilian older metropolises, where *favelas* are an important part of the physical and social reality of the city. This difficulty in urban missiology arises from two sources: first, the church's history and practice of missions, and second, the church's understanding of urban life. In terms of the church's history of mission, I will argue that the Lutheran immigrant experience in German settlements in rural Brazil shaped how Lutherans think of church and mission and led to limitations in urban missional and ecclesial practices. In particular, this historical experience led to the application of the so called "home mission principle" in Brazil whose primary focus was the German immigrants who were already Lutherans. Both aspects have shaped the missional thinking and practice of the church.

Second, in attempting to understand the city, missional leaders of the IELB in recent efforts have used a dualistic approach to understand the urban centers of Brazilian life. This has led to the neglect of understanding and interacting with the social and spatial reality of *favelas*. In trying to move from a "rural" to an "urban" setting, church leaders have portrayed the two environments in stark contrast with one another and relied on a theory that is very closely related to the traditional-modern continuum theory (presented in chapter I), leading to the view that *favelas* represent an example for the problematic consequences of urbanization and to the erasure of *favelas* from the missional scape. This recent attempt at urban missiology then fails at

accounting for the reality of *favelas* as part of the physical, social, and missional context.

The Lutheran German Experience in German Colonies in Brazil: The School, the Church Building and the Cemetery as the Center of Life

To fully understand the current urban mission efforts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil, it is helpful to see these efforts in light of the history of Lutheran missions in Brazil. Lutherans were one of many Protestant immigrant settlers in Brazil. A remarkable characteristic of Protestant immigrant settlements in rural Brazil was the kind of built environment that served as the center of their religious, social, and cultural life and that represented the immigrants' experience of isolation from the larger Brazilian society.

For these reasons, this section will show that this mission history is shaped by this experience of isolation represented by a rural built environment in German settlements and that such an environment fostered a certain self-protective attitude that affected later mission work.

The Rural Built Environment in Immigrant Settlements in Brazil

When immigrant Protestants arrived in Brazil in 1824, Catholicism was the official religion of the Empire, while other religious groups from that year on would be tolerated. Catholic church historian José Beozzo notes that while in the Constitution of 1824 Protestants were allowed in Brazil, Catholicism was still reaffirmed as the official religion. The fact that other Christian traditions would, from that point on, be tolerated, was something new for Brazil, but these traditions could be expressed in one's private life only, leading to feelings of marginalization among the Protestants. On the one hand, it was this tolerance that allowed non-Catholics to immigrate to Brazil. On the other hand, there was the perception that the non-Catholics were less

than fully citizens.[1] Immigrant Protestants were inhabitants of Brazil but did not have access to the basic services that the state provided. In addition, given that most of them had been placed in rural, isolated areas, they had to provide for themselves and organize life their own way. Thus, they built their own schools, cemeteries, and later on also church buildings. This kind of built environment served as the religious, social, and cultural centers of Protestant immigrants in Brazil.[2]

Particularly regarding Lutheran Germans in these isolated colonies, church historian and expert in German immigration Martin Dreher offers some details about the process of constructing this built environment. At first, Dreher describes, Lutherans gathered for worship in improvised huts led by pastors whom they would choose from their midst. Then soon they constructed the first building that would for many years serve as school and space for worship service; since only Catholics were allowed to publicly profess their faith, non-Catholics were allowed to worship in any private space as long as it did not look like a church building. The "school-church" building was then the center of the village, and right beside it stood the cemetery.

Dreher also affirms that organizing life around this isolated rural built environment led to a self-protective mindset, which led to ecclesiological consequences. This is implicit in Dreher's words, when the historian says that in such "ecclesiastic structure…all is 'ours'… our Church, our school, our cemetery, our pastor."[3] As a result, "The ecclesiological consequence of this communitarian Church is that the Church, with the passing of the years, more and more, ends at

[1] Oscar Jose Beozzo, "As Igrejas e a Imigração," in *Imigrações e História da Igreja no Brasil*, ed. Martin N. Dreher (Aparecida: Santuário, 1993), 32–33.

[2] Beozzo, "As Igrejas e a Imigração," in Dreher, 51.

[3] Martin Dreher, "Protestantismo de Imigração no Brasil," 121.

the limits of the settlement, lacking the perception for the catholicity of the Church."[4] For the historian, therefore, living in isolated settlements around this built environment shaped Lutherans' perspective on ecclesiological matters in a way that limited their vision of the church. These consequences have already been studied to explain why a congregationalist church culture arose among German Lutherans, which became a hindrance to organize congregations under regional or national church bodies like synods.[5]

This chapter will explore these ecclesiological consequences to the extent that they help one understand the missiological outcomes of this immigrant experience specifically regarding the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (known by the acronym IELB). All the points mentioned so far have affected the two major Lutheran church bodies that exist in Brazil today.[6] To further explore the particular shape of the IELB ecclesiological and missiological thinking and practices, it is important to understand the self-protective mindset that resulted from this immigrant experience in rural Brazil and the mission history of the IELB, paying special attention to the formation of the first Lutheran congregation founded by a LCMS missionary.

The Mission History of the IELB and the Immigrant Self-protective Mindset

To investigate the ecclesiological and missiological consequences that resulted from the

[4] Dreher, "Protestantismo de Imigração no Brasil," 121.

[5] See Eliseu Teichmann, *Imigração e Igreja: As comunidades-Livres no Contexto da Estruturação do Luteranismo no Rio Grande do Sul* (master's thesis, Faculdades EST, 1996).

[6] The Lutheran German immigrants whose settlements were just described formed the two major Lutheran church bodies on Brazilian soil—the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB), which resulted from an LCMS mission effort on Brazilian soil in 1900. The first successful attempt to bring Lutheran congregations together as an ecclesiastical organization was in 1886, when the Sínodo Riograndense was established in São Leopoldo. It was a regional church that was later joined by three other regional ecclesiastic organizations, forming then the IECLB. For a detailed account of the History of the IECLB, see Martin N. Dreher, "A História da Igreja Evangélica Luterana de Confissão Luterana no Brasil" in *Lutheran Presence 1990*, ed. Gottfried Brakemeier (São Leopoldo: Sinodal, 1989), 93–104. The IELB resulted from the effort of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which sent a missionary to visit different German immigrant colonies in Brazil in 1900. This dissertation speaks to the urban missiology of the IELB.

experience of isolation represented by the rural built environment described above it is important to look at the formation of the first LCMS congregation in Brazil, paying special attention to the reality which the Lutheran missionary from the USA encountered in Brazil and to the mission principle he brought with him and applied in Brazilian soil. In doing this, one can see that these two elements—immigrant experience of isolation and mission principle—reinforced one another, creating the necessary conditions for a work in continuity with the sending church's characteristics at the time. At the same time, they led to a way of doing missions that would enter Brazilian metropolises as the Lutheran church went to the cities.

The Rural Option and the Formation of the of the First LCMS Congregation in Brazil

When LCMS mission work started in Brazil, the religious scenario no longer was hostile to Protestantism. The change in the religious legislation in 1889, separating church and state, shaped a context in which different faith traditions could be expressed publicly and would have the right to have a temple.[7] Besides, the different Christian denominations present in Brazil would have to share a common city and sometimes even a same neighborhood in urban centers. This religious scenario represented an environment a bit more complicated than that in which German immigrants lived in the rural setting and even back home in Europe.

When the first missionary of the Missouri Synod, Rev. Carl J. Broders, arrived in Brazil in February of 1900, some German settlements had already developed and been connected with larger cities through roads for commerce purposes. This was the case with the area of São Leopoldo, where Broders first went to respond a request made by another Lutheran pastor, Rev.

[7] Brazilian Lutheran historian Mario Rehfeldt highlights a few aspects about the religious situation in Brazil at the turn of the century. In 1889 Brazil became a Republic, and one of the first actions taken by the provisory government was to establish the separation between church and state and thus give complete religious freedom to all inhabitants, which was sealed by the Constitution of 1891. Mário Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda: A História da Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil* (Porto Alegre: Concórdia, 2003), 1:21, 22.

Johan F. Brutschin, who was serving at two Lutheran congregations in this region.[8] São Leopoldo was the first German settlement in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, founded in 1824. Seventy six years later, at the turn of the nineteenth century, São Leopoldo and its surroundings had already been given the status of small city or town and were already functioning as an urban, semi-industrial center, fueling the capital of the State, Porto Alegre.[9] Therefore, when Broders arrived, the Germans living in that region no longer were a group isolated from the larger society, but had already gone through a process of adaptation to a new, more complicated environment to some extent.

As Broders arrived in São Leopoldo, he soon visited a few different localities to see whether he would or would not recommend the sending of more missionaries to Brazil. After some visits, Broders concluded that, "I cannot recommend the State of Rio Grande do Sul as a missionary field."[10] The reason for this was that in his analysis of the "spiritual condition" of the German immigrants he had identified moral problems and religious indifference among them.[11]

---

[8] The sending of Broders to Brazil in February of 1900 was partially a response to Rev. Brutschin's request. According to Rehfeldt, Brutschin had helped found the Riodrandense Synod but a few years later resigned from it. According to the historian, at the foundation of that synod Brutschin had "raised his voice in defense of the Lutheran Confessions." Although the historian recognizes that the reason for Brutschin's resignation is unknown, he offers the opinion that it was probably because the minister "did not want to remain in a synod that was not of a Lutheran character." The LCMS enters this picture because Brutschin had already been communicating with an LCMS pastor by mail, through which he would receive publications of the American church body and send reports about the precarious conditions of Lutheran faith in Brazil, mentioning a certain disregard for the Lutheran Confessions among pastors. In 1899, when Brutschin decided to return to Germany due to health issues, he requested a substitute from the Missouri Synod, whose theological positions he was already familiar and in agreement with. Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 1:26, 32.

[9] Dreher argues that already in 1845, the first German colonies in Rio Grande do Sul had developed economically to the point of participating actively in the economy of the Province. Dreher, "Protestantismo de Imigração no Brasil," in *Imigrações e História da Igreja no Brasil,* 122.

[10] Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 1:41.

[11] He mentions indifference towards church, the problem of drunkenness, sexual immorality, and the practice of dance as a big problem. Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda,* 1:40, 41. Dance had been renounced by the Synod of Missouri toward the end of the previous century; it held that "if a person still goes on dancing, then this will be a sign that he is frivolous and doesn't take God's Word seriously." Everette Meier and Herbert Mayer, "The Process of Americanization," in *Moving Frontiers*, ed. Carl S. Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 250.

Before giving up and returning to the USA, however, Broders decided to visit another region in the southern part of the State, around the city of Pelotas, whose rural areas had many German immigrants living in a less complicated environment. The German settlements in the southern part of the State, unlike the São Leopoldo area, were characterized by a strong isolation from the larger society, which has been appointed as one of the major characteristics of those groups by that time. The lack of roads to connect them to urban centers and the tendency among those immigrants to try to stay close to other Germans reinforced this isolation.[12] In addition, the first German colonists who settled in that region had arrived in Brazil in between 1856 and 1858. This means that by 1900 in those southern settlements there still were many people who had been born in Europe and still cultivated the customs of the homeland very strongly. This all shows how different the two environments visited by Broders were, which would implicate in different contexts for the church to operate.

Arriving in Pelotas, the missionary met a man who was from a colony called São Pedro, where a strong sense of self-protection was cultivated. The man was in the city selling vegetables produced in the colony when Broders decided to engage him in conversation. Brazilian church historian Mario Rehfeldt describes this encounter and its outcome as follows:

> Broders introduced himself, but the man remained suspicious, thinking that the pastor could be the member of a sect. Having returned to São Pedro he [the man] met a neighbor with whom he shared that in Pelotas he had met a man who [had]claimed to be an evangelical Lutheran pastor. The neighbor then advised him to bring that to *Vater* Gowert, who was versed in the Scriptures and smarter than everybody else [in the colony]. He could test the man and determine whether he was a real pastor. Thus, Broders was taken to São Pedro. He was examined [as far as his theology was

[12] See Dilza Porto Gonçalves, *A Memória na Construção de Identidades Étnicas: Um Estudo Sobre as Relações Entre "Alemães" e "Negros" em Canguçu* (master's thesis, Pontíficia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, 2008), 62–64.

> concerned] by *Vater* Gowert, passed the test, and summoned the families to organize an Evangelical Lutheran congregation.[13]

Rehfeldt then ends his description by saying that in July, 1 1900, a congregation was organized in São Pedro along with a parochial school and that the new congregation soon sent a call to the Department of Internal Mission of the Missouri Synod requesting for a pastor to come reside among them. Four years later, the first synodical district of the LCMS in Brazil was founded.[14] The historian's account exemplifies the characteristics of the German colonists. The suspicion toward Rev. Broders, the process of going back home and asking permission to bring the stranger in, and the questioning of the missionary exemplify a strong self-protective attitude.

This kind of attitude among these immigrants has already been interpreted and emphasized in theological terms as a concern for a pure Lutheran doctrine and for the confessionalism of the clergy among them. Rehfeldt's account represents this interpretation. His portrayal of the colonists as having the same kinds of concerns and position that the LCMS had about other Christian groups at the time exemplifies this very point.[15]

---

[13] Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda,* 1:42.

[14] Rehfeldt offers a detailed account of this event. He recalls that on June 25, 1904 the new district was named *Der Brasilianische District der deutschen evangelisch-lutherishen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten.* Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 1:63–65.

[15] The use Rehfeldt makes of the term "sect" to describe the German colonists' suspicion is revealing. This was the term used by Broders to refer to all other Protestant groups in Brazil. Broders placed the Lutherans of the Riograndense Synod with "40 Methodist missionaries, 70 Presbyterian missionaries, 33 Baptist missionaries, and 13 Episcopalian missionaries; these were all lumped together under the inclusive title 'sects.'" Dean Lueking, *Mission in the Making: The Missionary Enterprise among Missouri Synod Lutherans 1846–1963* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963), 13. This theological interpretation of the colonists' attitude is supported by the fact that many German immigrants in the southern region of Rio Grande do Sul were Teuto-Russians. This means that they had already had a previous immigrant experience in Russian soil where they could enjoy complete religious freedom and cultural autonomy from 1770 to 1870, consolidating very homogeneous colonies, both in terms of ethnicity and in terms of religion. Particularly regarding their religion, Teuto-Russians, given their isolation in Russia, had not been influenced by rationalism and unionism as other Lutheran groups had. The families in São Pedro, led by *Water* Gowert, were representatives of these Teuto-Russians who now they were living in isolated colonies of Rio Grande do Sul, where Broders began the first LCMS congregation in Brazil. Paulo W. Buss, *Relations Between The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and The Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil* (master's thesis, Concordia Seminary, 1981). See also Osvalso Hellmann, *A Identidade Teuto-Russo-Brasileira Através de Elementos Culturais e Educacionais Resgatados Entre os Imigrantes do Alto Uruguai Rio-Grandense* (master's thesis,), 85–92.

To advance this reflection for the purpose of this dissertation, it is important to recognize how the immigration experience of isolation in rural Brazil and the culture that emerged in this setting inflected the missiology of the church. One way of doing this is by, first, understanding the experience of immigration itself as it relates to religious life. Isolation and self-protectiveness have been studied as common phenomena among religious immigrant groups by American theologian Richard Niebuhr. He argues that to maintain a certain isolation from the larger society functions as a mechanism of self-protection, as a means to help preserve the language and customs of the "old homeland," resulting in a certain separatism among Protestant groups.[16] This point is not intended to be an alternative to the theological interpretation referred to above. Rather, it serves as a complementary perspective which offers a broader and richer picture. In such picture, those immigrants' self-protective attitude needs to be seen as the result of both their distinct religious characteristics and the immigrant experience of isolation in rural Brazil. In this way, one can also see how an immigrant rural culture shaped and was shaped by a particular kind of missional ecclesiology, as being in isolated rural areas offered the condition to cultivate such distinct religious characteristics away from the homeland.

A church historian who takes both this (rural) culture and theological aspect into consideration when looking at the Missouri Synod mission in Brazil is North American Dean Lueking. The historian argues that the sending of a missionary to Brazil results from the application of a mission principle under which the LCMS directed its mission efforts toward

[16] Although it has been demonstrated by Richard Niebuhr that 'isolation' is a mechanism used by all immigrants to preserve the customs of the "old homeland," in Brazil there was no alternative option for most of them due to the religious legislation at the time. On the 'isolation' of immigrants as a mechanism of self-protection, see Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1957), 223, 4. In this classic of sociology of religion, Niebuhr shows that because a new environment threatens the immigrants' mother tongue and tradition, they try to organize life around a center. Religion then becomes the center of values, customs, and traditions.

German immigrants throughout the world, the so called "home mission principle."

The Home Mission Principle and the Shape of Mission Thinking and Practice of the IELB

According to Lueking, this principle guided the Missouri Synod's missions in South America at the turn of the nineteenth century. It was primarily intended to gather, preserve or generate orthodox Lutheranism among German Lutheran immigrants spread throughout the world.[17] For the achievement of this goal, the maintenance of the German language, which was believed to help with the preservation of theology, and the parochial school, which would teach the catechism and the difference between the pure and the impure doctrine, were pivotal.

This mission principle needs to be understood in light of the "dominant characteristics" of the LCMS at the turn of the nineteenth century. Church historians Everette Meier and Herbert Mayer demonstrate that the time between the American Civil War and the end of WW I was marked by two strong characteristics—"a vigorous theological conservatism" and "an isolation from American linguistic, economic, and social patterns."[18] These characteristics then involved both a theological aspect and a cultural one. The first characteristic entailed the conviction that

[17] Lueking, *Mission in the Making*, 175. August R. Swelflow also helps us understand the mission work in Brazil. He characterizes the years between 1893 and 1946 as a period of "Growing Involvement in Christ's Mission" in the Synod's mission history. Preceded by a first period named "Inner Missions" and followed by an epoch of "Mushrooming Mission Expansion," the second period had as its major characteristic the Synod's attention directed to opportunities overseas. These are the periods and their respective characteristics. 1847–1892: Moments and Days of Inner Missions; 1893–1946: Moments and Days of a Growing Involvement of Christ's Mission; and 1947–1972: Moments and Days of Mushrooming Mission. August R Swelflow, ed., *Heritage in Motion* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1998), 316–18. The LCMS' growing involvement in Christ's mission, then, resulted in the sending of missionaries to Brazil among German immigrants in 1900. Brazilian historian Mario Rehfeldt also recognizes the emphasis on German immigrants affirmed by Lueking. Without offering any further theological reflection on this, the historian opens his book by talking about what he calls the "missionary vocation of the LCMS" in terms of mission work done primarily toward Lutheran immigrants in the USA and abroad. Rehfeldt, *O Grão de Mostarda*, 1:7–12.

[18] Meier and Mayer, "The Process of Americanization," 362–63. For more on the theological characteristics of the LCMS at the turn of the nineteenth century, see also Lueking, *Mission in the Making*, 287–89. For the historian, what Meier and Mayer call a "rigorous theological conservatism" entails the "tendency to identify the transforming power of the Gospel with its intellectual articulation." Lueking, *Mission in the Making*, 287–89. This tendency, in the author's view, had "conditioned the idea of missions as the imparting of correct doctrinal information to Christians of incorrect indoctrination." Lueking, *Mission in the Making*, 287–89.

"the Missouri Synod was the true Lutheran Church," which was based on the understanding that God had "graciously granted the possession of the full and pure truth of his Word" to "our Evangelical Lutheran Church." A corollary of this, then, was that the Missouri Synod Church, although recognizing that there is "a church among sectarians," cannot acknowledge these other Christian groups "as standing on an equality with her." The second characteristic, which was "shared with other ethnic groups," entailed an affirmation of the German language as a means to preserve their theological heritage and the German culture.[19]

When Lueking looks at the LCMS mission work in Brazil, the author identifies these two characteristics in the founding of the first congregation in São Pedro. In terms of the theological characteristic, the historian picks up on Broders' option for a more isolated area among a very distinctly German group and affirms that, in São Pedro, Broders could "recruit the already faithful into the true visible church," and could avoid "entanglements" with other Christian groups.[20] In terms of the isolationist church culture, Lueking makes a comparison by saying that in São Pedro, "There was no struggle to reap statistics, no language, cultural or theological barriers to cross. Men could move from a rural Nebraska parish post to rural Brazilian pastorate without a break in their assumptions and practices."[21] Lueking's analysis, unlike Rehfeldt's, brings a more critical lens to the table to look at this mission history. What the historian is saying is that the isolation and strong German culture in São Pedro facilitated the mission work as they allowed this work to be carried out in continuity with the characteristics of the sending church.

In this way, the home mission principle fostered what more recently has been called an 'ecclesiocentric model of mission.' Under this model, the mission work itself and the growth of

[19] Meier and Mayer, "The Process of Americanization," 362–63.

[20] Lueking, *Mission in the Making,* 180–81.

[21] Lueking, *Mission in the Making,* 181.

one's own denomination or church body are in practice one and the same thing, and the new church or congregation that emerges needs to reflect or mimic the sending church or congregation, as this model is centered in the sending church. In addition, this model implies that mission is viewed as an activity that the church might or might not do depending on the necessities and priorities the church establishes.[22]

The home mission principle would continue to guide the mission of the church in Brazil throughout its history, even though the church soon started moving to the cities. A few examples can illustrate this point. Consider how this historical experience shaped urban missiology as the Lutheran church entered Brazilian metropolises. Already in 1902, Rev. Wilhelm Mahler, first missionary to reside in Brazil in the colony of São Pedro after Broders' return to the USA, started first a school and then a congregation in the city of Porto Alegre, in the *Navegantes* neighborhood, where half of the dwellers were German immigrants. For Rev. Mahler, "the beginning [of a new congregation] needs to be with a school."[23] His decision to work in Porto Alegre was the answer to a call he received from a group of Germans who resided in that area. The pastor had met a resident of that neighborhood in a visit to that city a few months earlier.[24] The same orientation toward Germans is seen when the church grew to other regions of Brazil. When the secretary of missions of the LCMS Brazilian district heard that small numbers of German Lutherans had migrated to the metropolises of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Belo Horizonte in 1930s, the church sent pastors to start schools and congregations among them in

[22] Contemporary missiologist Darrell L. Guder talks about an "Ecclesiocentric understanding of mission" as follows: "The subtle assumption of much Western mission was that the church's missionary mandate [Matt 28] lay not only in forming the church of Christ, but in shaping the Christian communities that it birthed in the image of the church of Western European culture." Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for The Sending of The Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 4.

[23] Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 1:51, 52.

[24] Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 1:46, 47.

these cities.[25] In Rio, for instance, Rev. Rodolfo Hasse would also go to the port which was the gateway for immigrants in Brazil and approach Teuto-Russian Lutherans at the very occasion of their arrival. At these occasions, the pastor first "performed services and [then] directed them to pastors of the Missourian synod in Brazil."[26] The immigrants who were placed in Southern Brazil would enter the State through Porto Alegre, where another pastor would receive them. This is similar to the description offered by Lueking regarding the home mission principle being applied in the city of New York under the category "port city immigrant missions."[27]

These examples should suffice to demonstrate that the home mission principle was applied to the mission work in Brazil, which has already been recognized by many church historians.[28] What is yet to be further developed is the missiological implications of both this principle and the rural immigrant experience for missiology. To investigate such implications goes beyond recognizing that schools became the church's major mission strategy for some time. In fact, the parochial school in some instances was called "missionary school."[29] The school also

[25] Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda: A História da Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brazil,* 1:123–25.

[26] Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda,* 1:123–25. The sending of a missionary to the city of Belo Horizonte also serves as a good example. According to Rehfeldt, in 1933 Rev. Leonhard Klug was sent to the capital of the State of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, because the Department of Mission had been informed that there were about 350 German families living there. When the missionary arrived, he realized that there were only 150 German families, and none of them was Lutheran. Then, not having German Lutherans to pastor and form a congregation, Rev. Klug decided to start a school in that city. Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda,* 1:127.

[27] Lueking, *Mission in the Making,* 59–63.

[28] Rehfeldt himself recognizes that this mission work was limited to those already Lutherans. In his own words, "The missionary work was developed among Lutherans from a German background who requested a Missouri Synod [pastor] or who did not have pastoral care. The work did not have a character of mission among non-Christians, but among Lutherans and people who considered themselves to be Lutherans." Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda,* 1:173.

[29] The lack of schools among immigrants created a social need that the new Missouri district started to meet. Soon church leaders perceived that even those who were not Lutherans and lacked a school were willing to have a school organized by Lutheran pastors and teachers in their midst. In 1918, for instance, in the first mission among non-Germans, Rev. Rodolpho Hasse moved to Lagoa Vermelha to start a mission work among Lusitanian-Brazilians in Portuguese since they wanted to have a school in their midst. There he started what Rehfeldt refers to as a "missionary school" (as opposed to "parochial school"). Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda,* 1:51, 97–99.

accompanied the founding of the new congregations in the metropolises mentioned above in the 1930s.[30] The significance of the school as the major mission strategy in the first fifty years of the Brazilian Missouri district has already been demonstrated by Rehfeldt. Morever, a decline of the importance of schools in the life and mission of the church has also already been identified by Buss when he describes the church's challenges in the 1960s.[31] What my investigation of the missiological implications will show is that the historical experience described above caused internal challenges to the church as it tries to answer the challenge of urbanization, and that such challenges are hindrances to the church's mission in the urban environment and in *favelas* in particular.

The Internal Challenges the Historical Experience Brought to the Missiology of the IELB

The historical experience that comprehends both the immigrant isolated life around the rural built environment described above and the home mission principle resulted in two closely related internal challenges for the urban missiology of the church. The first challenge is a strong sense of self-preservation. The second is the problem of not attending to the new contexts where the church was becoming present through the formation of new congregations among Lutherans.

Let's first look at the strong mentality of self-preservation. One way of identifying this characteristic in the Brazilian church is by looking at a few characteristics the church had in the 1950s, when a massive migration to metropolises was beginning. Church historian Paulo Buss, who wrote a second volume on the history of the IELB in continuity with Rehfeldt's work, lists a

[30] Rehfeldt mentions the work of Rev. Waldo Rehfeldt in the Penha neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro and Rev. Otto Goerl in Indianópolis, São Paulo. In both instances, there were congregations close to these neighborhoods, and the schools served as means to expand the mission work primarily among Germans. Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda,* 1:123–25.

[31] This decline started to be recognized by the church in the 1960s due to the proliferation of public schools and the new regulations regarding education determined by the government. Paulo Buss, *Um Grão de Mostarda: A História da Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brazil*, (Porto Alegre:Concórdia, 2000), 2:100–101.

few characteristics which he considers to be hindrances to the church's indigenization. Among other aspects, Buss lists the church's "rural option" and a certain "regionalism." In terms of the rural option, Buss notes how the Brazilian Missouri district had intentionally focused on rural areas. The historian quotes a representative of the LCMS, Rev. Harold Ott, who wrote a report after visiting Brazil, criticizing the Brazilian district: "To maintain the church ruralized is considered the ideal; to drive the work into the cities is considered a dangerous tendency."[32] In the perception of Rev. Ott, who could look at the IELB's work from an outside standpoint, the church body seemed to be more concerned with its self-preservation than with reaching out to a massive population of migrants who was moving to metropolises.

The rural option, however, was not the only characteristic of the church that configured a challenge for urban missions. Another characteristic was what Buss calls "regionalism." It regards the tendency of the church to focus its work on the Southern region of Brazil, on the States of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina. Buss recalls that sometimes money and even missionaries were sent to Brazil with the intention of placing them in other regions, but the Brazilian district would place them in vacant congregations in Rio Grande do Sul. Therefore, although the church had already expanded to other States, the 457 out of its 621 congregations and preaching stations were located in these two Southern States,[33] showing a certain regionalism favoring the southern region of the country. This geographic penchant reveals that the Brazilian district was more concerned with preserving congregational work among Lutherans already organized in congregations in southern Brazil rather than making mission efforts where the number of Lutherans was much smaller, like in the southeastern metropolises.

[32] Buss, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 2:42.

[33] Buss, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 2:42.

These examples also show that the immigrant experience of Germans in rural Brazil and the home mission principle to some extent reinforced one another. The former offered the conditions for a work in continuity with the "vigorous theological conservatism" and the "cultural, linguistic isolation" characteristic of the LCMS when the "home mission abroad" led to the sending of a missionary to Brazil. The latter, in turn, offered a theological legitimization for an attitude of self-protection or even indifference toward the Brazilian wider society and other Christian denominations. On the one hand, the two together would help with the growth of the church, as congregations were planted in other regions and even in Brazilian metropolises. On the other hand, these two elements would also lead to a strong sense of self-preservation and to a problem that configures the second internal challenge for missiology, that is, the non-attendance to cultures in new contexts.

The second internal challenge for missiology is, therefore, the problem of not attending to the cultural differences when interacting with non-Germans and to the new context when moving from the rural to the urban centers. Given that the home mission principle allowed the church to do missions (mission being understood as the increase of Lutheran congregations) with little or no crossing of cultural boundaries, mission work came to be done with little or no adaptation.

"How could then non-German new converts become members of the church?"—one could ask. To put it bluntly, it was the receivers of the gospel who would have to take the first steps toward crossing the cultural boundaries. Consider, for instance, the formation of a congregation among a community of former slaves in the southernmost part of Brazil. It was a mission work in the colony of Solidez started in 1919, thirty-one years after the abolition of slavery in Brazil. This work resulted in the foundation of the first Lutheran "black-people congregation," as the congregation is usually called, in 1927. The Lutheran pastor in that colony, Rev. Augusto Drews,

was developing a mission work in that locality, attending eight German families who already had their own little school-church place for schooling the kids and having the worship services.[34] The first guest, non-Lutheran to attend a service, Drews narrates, was "an old man of the people of color [sic]" named Manoel Leal, who stood by the door and did not enter the chapel. With time, "more of his people"[35] showed up and stood at the same spot trying to listen to the message and the songs during the service, all of which were performed in German. Rev. Drews then decided to begin a conversation with them about visiting their community to lead services in Portuguese among them. Although Rev. Drews made efforts toward bridging the ethnic gap between the Germans and the African-Brazilians for the sake of the gospel,[36] in 1922 a conflict between them led to the decision that the African Brazilian community no longer should be allowed in the chapel.[37] The 'our-church' mentality was very strong, and the solution the Germans found to that problem was to close the church's door to that community of former slaves. This episode led Rev. Drews and the community of former slaves to work toward the formation of the first "back people congregation," separate from the German one, which was accomplished in 1927.

It is important to note from this brief account that it was the old man, Mr. Leal, who took the first step in terms of crossing cultural boundaries. He probably understood the message because he could understand a little bit of German, given that many former slaves used to work

[34] Ricardo Willy Rieth, "Evangélicos de 'Alma Branca': Os Negros e o Protestantismo no Brasil," in Hock Ingelore Starke, ed., *Brasil: Outros 500. Protestantismo e Resistência Indígena, Negra e Popular* (São Leopoldo: Sinodal/EST, 1999), 172–200.

[35] Augusto Drews, 1948c *Alguns fatos ocorridos na missão do Mun, Canguçu, R. Gr. do Sul.* Novembro de 1948 IHIELB. Porto Alegre. Livro 1 H. pag.53v, no. 151, Item 26.

[36] Drews had organized a Christmas celebration for the two groups to come together and celebrate Jesus' birth. But before the celebration a fight was started between the Germans and the black people, which resulted in a cancelation of the event. Rieth, "Evangélicos de 'Alma Branca'" 192.

[37] Rieth, "Evangélicos de 'Alma Branca,'" 192.

for German colonists in those days and learned to speak the language.[38] This example, on the one hand, shows the power of the gospel, as those people heard the message and started working with a German-descendant pastor to have their own congregation. Also, it shows that the pastor of that colony was willing to cross a racial boundary to form a Lutheran congregation among that community (once the first step toward that had been taken by Mr. Leal). On the other hand, this example also shows that it was necessary that those who were the receivers of the gospel had to cross the cultural boundary first. This mission work was possible because, as church historian Ricardo Rieth puts it, Mr. Leal "insisted to attend the service"[39] by the door of that chapel, which soon later was shut to him and his community.

Consider also another example that shows this culture-crossing internal challenge for the urban missiology of the church. In Buss' list of challenges to the church's indigenization, he includes "Germanism" as one of the church's characteristics in the 1950s. This problem regards the maintenance of the German language in a time and place where to speak German was not even unnecessary but also a cultural barrier for outsiders. It does not mean that German was the only language spoken in the church. If, for some reason or another, Portuguese speakers wanted to have a school or a congregation in their midst, pastors were willing to speak Portuguese, as mentioned in the case of the first "missionary school" in Lagoa Vermelha.[40] The problem Buss is pointing out is that German was predominant in the church. It is important to recall that the government had restricted the use of German in Brazil during both World War I and World War

[38] In her study about the inter-ethnic relations between the "Germans" and the "black people" of that locality, historian Dilza Pôrto Gonçalves enquires about how it was possible for the formation of a congregation of African-Brazilians within a "German church," and offers a narrative demonstrating that many of those former slaves could speak German in that locality by virtue of the work relations between the two groups, as the former would work on the fields of the latter group. Gonçalves, *A Memória na Construção de Identidades Étnicas.*

[39] Rieth, "Evangélicos de 'Alma Branca,'" 198.

[40] See footnote 29.

II periods.[41] These times of difficulty could have been also times of helpful changes, as pastors had to start preaching in Portuguese and the literature of the church came to be published in Portuguese. Thus, this could have been an important step toward the church's indigenization in an earlier period of its history. However, soon after these language restrictions were terminated, German again became the predominant language preached and written in the Lutheran church. One could argue that the major reason for this was that most of the church members could not speak Portuguese, as most of the congregations were located in southern States, in areas where German was predominantly spoken. However, it is important to recall that even in major cities where Portuguese was spoken by all, German was still favored at worship services. The example Buss offers shows this very point. According to the historian, in a mission work started in 1951 in the metropolis of Rio de Janeiro, the services were in German.[42] This metropolis was the capital of the county back then and a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural center where all people spoke Portuguese. German was a barrier for those who eventually might want to become members of the church. This fact makes one recall Niebuhr's point about the nature of language as far as immigrant experience is concerned and helps one see the relation between the strong mentality of self-preservation and the problem of not attending to context as far as culture is concerned. Niebuhr argues that language functions as a means to preserve the culture and religious heritage received in the homeland, as immigrants develop a strong sense of self-preservation in the new land and resist to any kind of adaptations.[43] In the case of the Brazilian Lutheran church, the immigrant self-preservationist mentality led to a neglect of the necessary

[41] In the second period, this restriction was imposed to people at first due to the project of nationalization carried out by president of Brazil Getúlio Vargas and was continued because of the hostility toward Germans as the result of WW II. Buss, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 2:42.

[42] Buss, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 2:42.

[43] Niebuhr, *Social Sources of Denominationalism*, 223–24.

crossing of cultural boundaries and adaptations to the urban environment.

Yet another example can illustrate the argument I am making regarding these challenges to urban missiology. In the 1970s, the Brazilian district decided to send more pastors to urban centers to increase the urban mission efforts of the church. This decision then led to the sending of five young pastors to the metropolis of São Paulo in December of 1973. One of them, Rev. Carlos Walter Winterle, soon began a mission work in the south region of the city, which resulted in the founding of the *Congregação da Paz* ("Congregation of Peace") in September of 1974. Winterle was very intentional in forming an ethnically diverse congregation, but often members would resist his suggestions in terms of contextualizing the church practices according to the urban environment. In the congregation's minute book, for instance, one can find a board of regents' meeting minute that shows this. In May of 1975, the second topic of the order of the day is named "informal liturgies." The description of how this topic was treated is limited to saying that Rev. Winterle talked about the possibility of having services that would be "more informal," something "like a Bible study." Then the minute reads that the "attendees thought that the form of our present liturgical service is very good and, thus, we should not change it."[44] Notice that the pastor was proposing a change from using the traditional liturgical forms used by the church until then every Sunday, a common practice in the homogeneous culture in rural German settlements, to having a less traditional one sometimes, given that the Congregation of Peace was located in a very ethnically and culturally diverse metropolis. Moreover, the Bible-study style the pastor was suggesting would stress more the Word of God and less the organ-based chanting, creating more opportunity for biblical teaching. Yet, the church leaders preferred

[44] Reunião de Diretoria da Igreja Evangélica Luterana da Paz de Rio Bonito, São Paulo, Maio/1975, Livro de Atas da Congregação da Paz (Book of Minutes), Arquivos da Congregação da Paz, São Paulo.

to maintain the traditional form.

This shows that the internal challenge was not a problem of church administration limited to a few leaders. The desire to cultivate a certain uniformity that would maintain the same practices common in the rural context was a position held by church members who had migrated to the city during the massive urbanization of Brazil. Such practices were sometimes the German language, like in Rio two decades earlier, or the traditional liturgical language and music rhythm, as this episode in São Paulo exemplifies. In both instances, for Non-Germans or non-Lutherans to become members of the church, they would have to learn a new language or to sing in an unfamiliar rhythm in order to participate in the worship life of the church. The effort in terms of crossing cultural boundaries would have to be made by the receivers of the gospel.

All this shows that the immigrant experience of isolation in urban Brazil and the home mission principle fostered both a strong mentality of self-preservation and the problem of not attending to the new urban contexts to which the church was slowly moving. By focusing on Germans who were already Lutherans under the home mission principle, the church did not have to adapt much to the new environment to which it would go. The church slowly moved from one built environment to another, from having the school-church as the center of life to an urban, complex environment that has many ‘centers’ around which life is organized. It was a change of place without changing the practices that had emerged from within the immigrant, rural built environment. One could argue that the home mission principle was merely the first step toward establishing congregations that would later engage their social setting in mission. In fact, this may have been the expectation of many church leaders, and it may have worked in some cases. Still, since the primary way of thinking about missions was the home mission principle oriented toward a strong mentality of self-preservation, all the effort, support, and intentionality were

directed toward the expansion of the church through the multiplication of congregations among German Lutherans. This way, when doing mission work in Brazilian metropolises, the church would create a less complicated space to operate within these metropolises. The temple, the church hall, and even the school in many cases, served also as a less complicated space where a homogeneous church culture was fostered, maintaining the practices that had emerged in the rural environment, though the church was now present in highly heterogenous, complex cities.

To recognize these internal challenges helps one understand why in the 1990s, for some church leaders, "even some of the urban congregations of the IELB maintain traces of the rural origin of its members."[45] The church moved to the city while maintaining the same ecclesiology and missiology that emerged in the rural environment; the church maintained the rural missional ecclesiology.

An important question to be asked at this point is this: where does *favela* enter this picture? Or, how has this mission practice accounted for the reality of *favelas*? In light of what was shown in the first chapter, and given the characteristics of the IELB's missiology shown in the present chapter, one could say that *favelas* represent one of the biggest challenges the Lutheran church has to face in Brazilian metropolises. The reason for this is that, unlike the rural environment and the less complicated space created by the church in metropolises through the maintenance of the same practices cultivated in the rural setting, *favelas* are very diverse both ethnically and culturally. While representing a big challenge, however, very little has been said about the church's work in *favelas.* A very brief reference to *favelas* is made in the second volume of the history of the IELB under the category "social action," when Buss covers the 1960s. He says that in that decade the IELB was already working "in villages and *favelas* of the

[45] Buss, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 2:307.

Greater Area of Porto Alegre and in Rio de Janeiro. Besides taking care of the spiritual necessities of the people, the Church also would distribute food products, medicines, and clothing in these locales."[46] The fact that *favelas* appear under the topic "social action," (and this action being understood as giving "food products, medicine, and clothing") and not under "missions" is revealing. It is difficult to argue on the basis of absence, as nothing else is documented about work in *favelas.* Yet, a logical conclusion one can come to is that *favelas,* under the home mission principle, do not fit in the missional landscape of the church's vision, as this principle has an ethnic orientation, reinforces the sense of self-preservation and favors those already Lutherans primarily in terms of mission focus.

This does not mean that local churches have never done any mission work in *favelas* through pastors' or congregations' initiatives. Rather, it means that they have had to face the internal challenges or hindrances in attempting to do such a work. Informed by Osmer's descriptive task of practical theology, which includes the gathering of information also in an informal way by talking and listening to church leaders, I have had conversations both *in loco* and by email with faithful servants of Christ who have developed some work in *favelas,* both in the past and in the present. Rev. Luiz Garlip, who served in Rio de Janeiro in 1970s, is one of them. In describing his congregation's work, Rev. Garlip says that, "in respect to working in [a *favela*] community, we had one family in the *Favela* of Candelária that was attended regularly [with pastoral care] and through which I have learned to interact with that [*favela*] people along with their costumes, norms and laws." Another pastor serving in Rio since 2014, Rev. Juan Nogueira, describes his congregation's work in the *Favela* of Santíssimo as "basically a

[46] Buss, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 2:88. Although it is difficult to elaborate much on this isolated instance of work in *favelas,* the fact that congregations being formed in *favelas* are not described is revealing. In *favelas,* it is by "mutirões" ("informal joined efforts") that the dwellers answer their needs, as appointed by scholars (referenced above), and not by standing on the receiving end of a "social action" done by others who are completely outsiders.

maintenance of the work with the members of the congregation" through "weekly worship services and Bible studies." Rev. Nogueira's congregation is not located in a *favela* but has a "preaching point" or preaching station in Santíssimo. Common in these two brief descriptions is the focus on those already Lutherans. Rev. Galip says that his congregation's work consisted basically of attending the one Lutheran family in the *Favela* of Candelária, although that one family served as a means to learn about the cultures of the people there and to interact with them. Rev. Nogueira, in a similar way, uses the word "maintenance" to refer to a work oriented toward the preservation of those already Lutherans. Nogueira, in particular, talks about his strong desire many pastors would probably have, like he does, to do something toward the *favela* surrounding community, but he strongly emphasizes that we don't know how. "How to do it, so that it will work in the locality where I am?"—says the pastor, voicing the concern that the IELB pastors and congregations do not know how to do a mission work that consists of engaging the congregation to reach out to the local community.

A clear recognition of what I am calling internal challenges of the church as a hindrance to this kind of work appears in the description offered by Rev. Rômulo Souza, who has served in São Gonçalo, a peripheric area of Rio, since 2011. He defines the congregational work there in terms of "caring for members of the congregation, those who are already Lutherans," through worship services, Bible studies, and pastoral visitation. For Rev. Rômulo, "we have people concerned with the church, concerned with the congregation, with mission, but very often [this concern regards] the maintenance of the church in terms of cleaning, [caring for] the property, [and] not exactly [developing these activities] with an eye on the surrounding community." This concern that the congregation does not work toward the surrounding community is very closely related to that which Rev. Rômulo considers to be one of the "key points" to understand the

challenges of the IELB in this urban environment. “For the beginning of our mission work in a favela, I perceive, our goal needs to be different. Usually, we have a missionary vision… in terms of reaching out to Lutherans, we become present where Lutherans are. Actually, our target shouldn’t be just Lutherans or not even just Christians [in general], but our target should be human beings. [This work would consist of] taking roots in a favela to try to help people and meet their needs… to meet the community’s needs, and not only [the needs of] Lutherans. This is, no doubt, the biggest challenge to be overcome in trying to plant a church in a favela.” There are two important points to be noted in Rev. Souza’s description and opinion. First, there are members engaged in congregational work, but this is a kind of work that consists of maintaining the property of the church, which fits well within what I am calling the self-preservationist mentality. The pastor recognizes that this is important, but he also points out that it is limited to reach out to non-members and to do actual mission work in a *favela*. Second, Souza explicitly relates the challenges the IELB has with what I am describing in terms of home mission principle, that is, the orientation and intentionality primarily directed toward those already Lutherans.

These instances show that local initiatives do have, to some extent, tried to answer the challenges of Brazilian metropolises regarding the reality of *favelas*, but they also reveal that the internal challenges of the IELB still hinder this answer. In addition, the fact that today’s pastors are still facing some of the same challenges of the past shows that more needs to be done in terms of forming an urban missiology.

This recognition has already been voiced by church leaders at large in more recent developments at missiology, trying to answer the Brazilian urban challenges. To investigate the material produced to answer this challenge will help understand some of the reasons why in 2018

pastors are trying to be intentional in doing missions in a different way but still find it difficult to work in *favelas.*

Recent Efforts at Urban Missions in Brazil

Looking at these aspects of the mission history of the IELB explored above, one could say that a new way of thinking about the church's mission started when church leaders came to realize that one of the challenges of the IELB was urbanization and the move of the church to the cities without a proper adaptation.[47] In an article entitled the *Mission of the IELB* in the early 1990s, Leonardo Neitzel recalls that while the "hinterlands" became empty, the larger society saw an "urban explosion" that brought "rapid and constant changes of the *modus vivendi* of society."[48] Along the same lines, national coordinator of evangelization in the same decade, Rev. Reinaldo Luedke, talks about urbanization and the migration of Lutherans to the cities: "the church of the rural zone was transplanted to the cities. . . . We organize ourselves as Lutheran churches, often extraneous to the yearnings, concerns and needs of the urban centers."[49] In early-2000s, the president of the Seminary in São Paulo, Ari Lange, would introduce an edition of the journal of that school—*Vox Concordiana*—about urban missions by saying that, "to try to evangelize the urban man on the basis of the paradigms of the rural church will find great

[47] Already in 1973, Seminary professor Oswaldo Schueler introduced the term "contextualization" to faculty members and students in an inaugural lecture in the opening of that year. Schueler argued that the information provided by social scientists should inform the pastors of the IELB in order for them to preach the gospel in a better contextualized form. But it was only about 20 years later that a pastor picked up on Schueler's proposal and wrote a master's thesis on the contextualization of the gospel for the Brazilian context. Rony Ricardo Marcquardt, author of this thesis, showed the importance of his work by mentioning the difficulty the church was having to become an urban church in a period when the urbanization rate was highly increasing, and the IELB would lose members in Brazilian big cities. Oswaldo Schueler, "A Leitura do Tempo," *in Lar Cristão* (Porto Alegre: Concórdia: 1974), 104–8. See also Rony Ricardo Marquardt, *A Contextualização na Ação Missionária da Igreja* (Canoas: Ulbra, 2005).

[48] Leonardo Neitzel, "A Missão da IELB," *Vox Concordiana* 8, no. 2 (1992): 13–21.

[49] Reinaldo Luedke, "A Igreja na Cidade," *Vox Concordiana* 15, no. 15 (2000): 25–35.

difficulties in achieving [the intended] goals."[50]

This awareness of the new context and the self-criticism about the lack of adaptation mark a turning point in the missional thinking and practice in the IELB. In the early-1980s, a Seminary was opened in the metropolis of São Paulo. The *Instituto Concordia de São Paulo* (ICSP) had already functioned as a school and pre-seminary before, but now it would provide pastoral formation and emphasize the missionary activity of the church. For some church leaders, "to open this school is a moral debt"[51] which the church had with other regions of Brazil, given that São Paulo was, and still is, an economic and cultural center, and as such, having a Seminary in this city would facilitate the incoming of students or candidates from other, Northern regions of the country.[52] Besides, the candidates would then receive theological formation and be able to do field work in one of the biggest metropolises of the world. The faculty of the then new Seminary started reflecting theologically, from within the Brazilian urban context, about how to become an urban church and do urban missions. Its president, Rev. Lange, held a degree in missiology from the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany. Another faculty member, Leonardo Neitzel, had been a missionary to Northeastern metropolises and would earn a PhD in Missiology from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, USA, toward the end of the 1990s. Another faculty of the ICSP who played an important role in shaping the recent efforts toward missional practice of the church is Rev. Erní Seibert, who received a doctorate in Science of Religion from the Universidade Metodist de São Paulo, Brazil, in the mid-1990s. They all

[50] Ari Lange, "Tribuna," *Vox Concordiana* 8, no. 2 (1992): 5–6.

[51] Buss, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 2:265.

[52] Until then, the church's Seminary had been in different localities in the Southern State of Rio Grande do Sul. The Seminário Concórdia first started in the locality of Bom Jesus, an isolated colony close to the colony of São Pedro, in 1903. Then it moved to the city of Porta Alegre in 1907 and to the city of São Leopoldo in 1978. See Rehfeldt, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 1:53, 72. See also Buss, *Um Grão de Mostarda*, 2:204. The Seminary in São Paulo was closed in 2002 due to financial issues. Today, the IELB has only one seminary, located in São Leopoldo.

would write and publish articles and books on topics related to missions in the Brazilian context.

Now, therefore, not only mission strategies were being adapted and applied to Brazil, but missiology with an emphasis on the city was the object of study among Lutheran scholars of the IELB. Already in 1989, the school organized the Missionary Research and Training Center and founded the International Center of Missionary Training (known in Portuguese by the acronym CITM) a few years later. The faculty also organized forums and symposia on the topic "urban mission" throughout that decade. Church wide, the coordinator of evangelism quoted above facilitated, in the same decade, the formation of a program called Evangelization and Christian Stewardship Program. This program, which persists still today, has promoted Bible studies outside the church buildings, in the homes of the members in small groups, in order to promote fellowship among church members and the possibility for witness outside the walls of congregations. All these developments represent this turning point.

The missional thinking and practice of this period is marked by three major characteristics: (1) an emphasis on the *Missio Dei* concept of missions along with its ecclesiological overtones; (2) a stress on the necessity of becoming an urban church, moving from a German, rural church culture to an urban one; and (3) an effort to understand the city in order to do missions in a way that communicates the gospel better and meets the needs of urban people.

Analysis of this missional thinking reveals an intention to form an urban missiology, somewhat distinct from the rural origins of the church. The emphasis on *Missio Dei* and on becoming an urban church were in stark contrast to the earlier missional work of the Lutheran church in Brazil. Earlier, the church had worked with the ecclesiocentric model explained above applied under the home mission principle. This means that the priority was to gather and preserve German Lutherans by establishing Lutheran congregations. These congregations, as

shown above, reflected the same rural way of being church that resulted from the immigrant experience and the characteristics of the LCMS around 1900. In more recent attempts toward missional thinking and practice, however, this changed.

For example, the motto of the IELB chosen for the 1990s was "Christ for All."[53] In a meeting of church leaders who represented all the districts of the synod held in Porto Alegre, in 1991, it was decided that *Cristo para Todos* ("Christ for All") would be the motto for the church to develop the mission work under the then new emphasis until the year 2000. In 1992, a hymn written and composed by faculty members of the new Seminary was also entitled "Christ for All."[54] In the same year, an article written by Neitzel and published in the 1992 edition of the journal of this Seminary related the IELB mission, alluding to its motto, to the *Missio Dei* model. Commenting on the choice for this motto, Neitzel says that, "it points to the mercy of God in Christ reaching out to all people indistinctly, crossing cultural, social and geographic boundaries."[55] The article ends stating that the IELB should change from a "*Deutschekirche* to *Volkskirche* in Brazilian soil."[56]

Almost 10 years later, the same faculty member would stress some of the same points and indicate that the themes of 'contextualization' and 'Incarnation' could help the church engage the urban context without abandoning the IELB's Lutheran heritage.[57] There are two closely related important aspects to be highlighted at this point. First, the ecclesiological articulation that

[53] Neitzel, "A Missão da IELB," 13–21. In 1998, in the 56th National Convention of the IELB, this motto was officially adopted as the permanent motto of the church body. See Marquardt, *A Contextualização na Ação Missionária da Igreja*, 55.

[54] Raul Blum and Erni Seibert, "Música/ Cristo Para Todos," *Vox Concordiana* 8, no. 1 (1992): 58, 59.

[55] Neitzel, "A Missão da IELB," 13–21

[56] Neitzel, "A Missão da IELB," 13–21.

[57] Leonardo Neitzel, "Missão Urbana e Família – Desafios e Perspecticas," *Vox Concordiana* 16, no. 2 (2001): 35–71.

affirmed a true Lutheranism that needed to be preserved is no longer the major theological theme that shaped the mission of the church. Rather, Christology with an emphasis on God's incarnation becomes the major theological theme that should inform a way of being church in urban Brazil. This is a clear evidence of a change from an ecclesiocentric to a theocentric mission model. Second, as a result of the first point, contextualization and the Incarnation could potentially help overcome the internal challenges that resulted from the history of mission, as they lead to adaptation to new contexts.

Also Seibert would write about the relation between ecclesiology and missiology and relate both to the *Missio Dei* model. The contrast between this model and the ecclesiocentric one is evident in Seibert's text as well, as the author emphasizes that Lutheran Ecclesiology, because of its centrality on the proclamation of the gospel, is intrinsically mission–oriented (now mission being understood primarily as proclaiming the gospel to the lost).[58] Notice that now ecclesiology is also part of the picture, but the emphasis is placed on the proclamation of the gospel to all. This can be viewed as reflecting the *Missio Dei* model due to the fact that the church, in this model, is essentially mission–oriented; the church, as it will be pointed out in chapter five, is "in mission" constantly because of its identity. These developments, therefore, can be seen as a departure from the mission principle and work that allowed the church to be present in the city and yet without adapting to the urban setting as a result of its focus on German descendants.

After the closing of the Seminary in São Paulo in 2002 due to financial issues the church body was facing, the emphasis on the *Missio Dei* model was carried on through the CITM symposia under the organization of Rev. Anselmo E. Graff, professor of missiology of the Seminary in São Leopoldo. Graff already held a master's degree in Systematic theology from

[58] Erní Walter Seibert, ed., *A Missão de Deus Diante de um Novo Milênio* (Porto Alegre: Concódia, 2000).

CSL and would earn a doctorate in education from the Universidade Lasalle de Canoas, in 2017. Under Graff's organization of these symposia since 2006, the church has paid attention to highly important matters in missiology, such as pluralism, cross-cultural mission, and evangelistic methods, just to mention a few. Therefore, as the result of this professor's work, one can notice a broadening of the scope of missiology-related topics treated by Brazilian theologians, which has highly enriched the missiological thinking of the IELB in general.

Particularly in regard to urban missions, some advance has lately been achieved from 2014 on.[59] In this year, a missionary training center was founded in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the "Centro de Treinamento Missionário Nestor Welzel," (CTM-NW) as the result of the efforts of local church leaders and Rev. Laerte Tardelli Voss, a former missionary to Hispanics in the USA who has served in Rio since 2013. This training center has since then promoted urban mission training to Brazilian pastors and church leaders and, in partnership with CITM, has organized regional urban mission forums and symposia focusing mainly on the Southeastern region of Brazil. As a result, again, pastors and church leaders are reflecting about urban missions from within the urban context.

While this desire to form an urban missiology distinct from the rural origins of the church was helpful, the effects of this development were hindered by definitions of the urban environment. In particular, the way the city and its challenges have been understood and described may have still led the church to overlook the complexity of Southeastern metropolises

[59] Before that, from 2001 to 2012, only one paper on urban missions appears in the four books that resulted from these symposia. It was delivered by Rev. Mario Fukue, a pastor then serving in the city of São Paulo, who writes about missions in a megalopolis ("God's Mission in the Megalopolis"). Fukue stresses the same *Missio Dei* understanding of missions as well as the Incarnation ("Jesus' self-emptying") as the basis and direction in terms of how to seek the lost in the megalopolis, both points along the lines of what Neitzel had already put forward in the previous decades. Mario Rafael Fukue, "A Missão de Deus na Megalópole," in *Testemunho, Misericórdia e Vida em Comunhão: O Futuro da Missão do Cristianismo*, ed. Anselmo Graff (Porto Alegre: Concórdia, 2013), 85–100.

as far as *favelas* are concerned.

The Limits of the IELB's Understanding of Brazilian Metropolises

The limits of these definitions by missional leaders in part regard how the social experience in the city is described. These leaders portray social life in the urban environment in stark contrast with the 'rural,' and describe the former environment in a negative way. In a *Symposium of Urban Missions* in the São Paulo Seminary in 2001, for instance, Neitzel affirms that one of the major consequences of urbanization is that people have become very individualistic, isolated from community life, and relativistic when it comes to moral values and religion in the cities. In this context, the traditional family is said to be constantly under attack.[60] Rev. Luedke's description of the city and its inhabitants in a *Regional Forum of Urban Mission* also in 2001 follows the same pattern. More and more "the family, the church, the state, and the school itself" lose their importance as "agents of socialization." What determines one's social interactions and moral values is the individual's personal choice.[61] Luedke recognizes that the difference between the rural and the urban shouldn't be too accentuated given that many city dwellers in Brazil are migrants from the country side who bring with them their rural life style to the cities. Yet, even though he is aware of the complexity of the situation, he still highlights the following distinctions:

> The rural society can be seen as governed by tradition, by accumulated experience from the past. This fact justifies the relative stability of rural societies, where changes are slow and rare. The modern urban society, on the other hand, is geared, preferentially, toward innovation.[62]

It is important to note that the characteristics of the two environments are posited in stark

[60] Neitzel, "Missão Urbana e Família," 35–71.

[61] Luedke, "A Igreja na Cidade," 25–35.

[62] Luedke, "A Igreja na Cidade," 25–35.

contrast and the urban setting is viewed with a certain suspicion, creating a certain negative view of urban life. Such a negative view is repeated in the 2012 CITM symposium by Rev. Mário Fukue[63] and in a 2016 symposium of urban missions in Rio de Janeiro, where Rev. Jonas Flor refers to the urban person as an "anonymous and solitary citizen."[64]

Another point to be considered is how these missional thinkers portray religious experience in the urban context. While maintaining that religion does not disappear in the city, religious expressions are usually interpreted as reflecting the logic ascribed to the urban context. These expressions then are fit into non-religious, economic frameworks. As a result, exploitation, manipulation, competition, consumerism, and market are the major categories used to analyze the religious movements in the city.[65] Thus, one's religious individual choice is said to be the result of an attempt to alleviate the anxieties that the industrial, capitalist urban setting brings to the individual, who is said to go "shopping" in the religious market.

Luedke brings all these elements together when he says that,

> The people no longer are deeply integrated in the small rural communities and [now] find themselves exposed to the 'solitary crowd' of the city. They seek individually a subjective realization. Also in the religious field, they are guided by emotion, by taste, by preference, by the search for the answers to the new anxieties and desires. Religion is chosen (or abandoned) not under the pressure of society or of tradition but stems from lived experience. The urban human being is not concerned with the pure doctrine. What counts for him is the sensation of well-being.[66]

This quote captures the same negative way about social and religious experience in the city as

[63] In the only article about urban missions in the symposium, Rev. Fukue's description of the urban dweller under the heading *Massificação e Individualismo* ("Massification and Individualism") reinforces this negative sociological view of urban life. Fukue, "A Missão de Deus na Megalópole."

[64] Jonas Flor, "Painel de Abertura: A Reforma e a Missão Urbana Hoje" (presentation, Forum de Missão Urbana, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, November 25–26, 2016).

[65] See, for instance, how much Neitzel relies on Gottftied Brakemeir's understanding of religions in terms of a market. While this kind of description is part of the picture, it tends to reduce the experience of the transcendent and sacred to a mere reflection of the capitalist logic. Neitzel, "Missão Urbana e Família," 35–71.

[66] Luedke, "A Igreja na Cidade," 25–35.

articulated from the early-1990s to 2016, showing how strong this way of defining the city is. Individualism, abandonment of traditions, and secularism are the major categories that permeate these definitions of the urban in this recent attempt at urban missiology in the IELB.

As noted in chapter one, *favelas* are complex sites of social-cultural engagement, and their dwellers tend to have a strong relational culture. So, how do *favelas* fit in the IELB's portrayal of the city? A conclusion at which one could arrive at this point is that a strict definition of the urban environment (in contrast to the rural) has the effect of erasing the presence of *favelas* from the urban landscape or marginalizing them in negative ways. To understand this, it is important to identify the theory that underlies the definitions of the urban offered by the missional thinkers.

The Folk-Urban Continuum Theory and its Effect on Urban Missiology

In his theorization of the urban, Brazilian Anthropologist Ruben Oliven notes the way in which descriptions of the urban can fall into hardened dichotomizations. One example of this kind of approach is what Oliven refers to as the "folk-urban continuum" theory. This theory was formulated by North American anthropologist Robert Redfield as the result of his comparative studies in Mexico in 1941. In anthropological studies, this way of looking at societies fits in the so called "theories of contrast," as it contrasts the "characteristics of a non-urban society with those of an urban one."[67]

Through the lens of this theory, Oliven explains, "urbanization would weaken or destroy the strong bonds" which held people together in the rural setting, creating an "urban culture characterized by fragmentation of social roles and a behavior that is more secular and individualist."[68] Notice how the characteristics this theory ascribes to the urban match the

[67] Oliven, *Antropologia de Grupos Urbanos*, 19.

[68] Oliven, *Antropologia de Grupos Urbanos*, 19.

definitions of the city offered by the missional thinkers of the IELB. Implicit in the terms "solitary crowd" and "anonymous solitary citizens" used by these thinkers and posed in contrast to rural life is the understanding that the rural setting cultivates real community life. Luedke's explanation that the family, the church, and the school are no longer the "agents of socialization" in the city, for instance, aligns with the fragmentation of social roles in the urban setting according to this theory. The missional thinkers' emphasis on "one's personal choice" in terms of social interactions and religion is contrasted to the country side, where religion is understood to be something received from past generations.

As far as this dissertation is concerned, these definitions and theory have two limits. One of them regards the mission strategy to which they have led. This strategy is limited to overcome the previous, rural model of missions. The other limit is the failure to account for the complexity of *favelas,* which again results in a failure to attend to the culture where the church is in.

Let's first look at the first limit. The *Programa de Evangelização e Mordomia Cristã* ("Evangelization and Christian Stewardship Program"), identified by the acronym PEM, was the major evangelistic program of the IELB used as an urban mission strategy. It was started in 1991, along with the Christ-for-All motto. It consists of having Bible studies at the church members' homes, where other members, their relatives and, ideally, next door neighbors are all invited to attend. The studies are prepared by the department of Christian education and published by the publishing house of the synod. Ideally, laypeople are prepared by their pastors to lead the studies by reading the material with the people. This program is mentioned in Neitzel's 1992 article on the mission of the IELB, where he connects this program with the IELB's "global actions" in fulfilment of the Great Commission and the indicated motto. About ten years later, Neitzel, again, and Luedke mention the program as they write about urban

missions.

The use of this program as an urban mission strategy is directly related to the definition of the city according to the folk-urban continuum theory. As just pointed out, loss of community bonds, the fragmentation of the family, and individualism are challenges identified in the urban context through the lens of this theory. Now, to have Bible studies in people's homes, where church members and their families who live in the same area can all be together, can serve as a means to answer these very challenges. This interpretation finds support in Neitzel's 2001 article on urban mission and the family, where he mentions the PEM as an urban mission strategy: "By having been emphasizing the sharing of the gospel in family groups, [the program] has produced very good results in urban mission."[69] To put this simply, my argument at this point is that looking at the city through lens of the folk-urban theory leads to the conclusion that the PEM is a good strategy for the urban setting.

The same cannot be said, however, when one accounts for all the complexities of the urban environment shown in the first chapter and the internal challenges the IELB has, those related to its immigrant and mission histories. Neitzel himself continues his assessment of the program and states that, "one still can notice the necessity of a stronger commitment of the congregation, the local leadership, and support so that *the strategy may go beyond the families of the church and incorporate other families of the social community in the neighborhood* [original emphasis]."[70] What is implicit in these words is that the PEM was not helping the church to cross the cultural and social boundaries necessary for its mission in the city. Neitzel himself had already said in his 1992 article that one of the challenges the church should face in urban mission was "to try to

[69] Neitzel, "Missão Urbana e Família – Desafios e Perspecticas," 35–71.

[70] Neitzel, "Missão Urbana e Família – Desafios e Perspecticas," 35–71.

overcome the [social] class barriers in the sense of including all classes equally in the evangelistic goals of the church."[71] But as he testified about ten years later, the program was failing at a very basic point—to reach out to people beyond the members of the church.

To put all this in other words, the PEM as an urban-mission strategy, on the one hand, may be answering some of the challenges the church has identified in the urban context. On the other hand, it maintains the same orientation toward or focusing on those who are already Lutherans, which becomes counter-intuitive if the church really wants to overcome the previous mission model. In this way, while the PEM helps the church achieve some of its goals, the program still fosters the previous mentality. It potentially strengthens the fellowship among church members and creates one more opportunity for increasing their knowledge of the Bible and of the Christian Lutheran doctrine, which are desirable goals among Lutherans in any context. However, the same problem of intentionality present in the previous model still persists, for the program's primary goal is to gather church members around God's Word for studying and fellowship. Neighbors who are not Christians may be invited for the study, but the primary goal is to gather those already members for teaching and fellowship. Although the PEM was created under a Christ-for-all mentality, it might easily end up in continuity with the home mission principle.

As a result, one can notice how the way the city is understood though the folk-urban theory limits the missional practice to a strategy that fails to reach out to people beyond those who are already members. The program answers only those challenges that the urban missiology of the IELB has identified in terms of individualism, fragmentation of family bonds, and abandonment of church fellowship as the result of urbanization.

[71] Neitzel, "A Missão da IELB," 13–21

This all may help one understand why this program was not working in urban congregations by the year 2001, as Rev. Luedke, its coordinator during the 1990s, attests: "The statistical information of the IELB shows that the PEM has had a good acceptance in small and medium-sized cities, as well as in the rural areas. When it comes to bigger urban centers, the program has had less success."[72]

Now, let's look at the second limit, which regards how the city is understood and results in a failure to account for the complexity of *favelas* and their cultures. In Oliven's analysis of the folk-urban continuum theory, he affirms that one of the limits of this theory is its underlying assumption that the city is an "independent variant."[73] By this term the author means that the city has a certain intrinsic logic or functions in a certain way that is not produced by its dwellers as the result of their social interactions. Social relations and behavior thus are viewed as the result of this logic. People and their interactions and practices do not create nor shape this logic; they are merely shaped by it, as a kind of determinism.[74] As a result, an 'urban society,' driven by rationality and the capitalist relations of exploration, production, and consumption—which are said to be the logic of the industrial city—would by necessity lead to secularization, fragmentation, and individualism. This understanding of the city, which is implicit in Neitzel's and Luedke's definitions, is explicitly voiced in a Regional Urban Forum in Rio Grande do Sul in 1999. Augusto Kircheim, a former pastor of the IELB, affirms that the urban person is fruit of "the social relations that results from a logic of production and exploration that is different of the

[72] Luedke, "A Igreja na Cidade," 25–35.

[73] For Oliven, this understanding of the city presupposes that "the culture is viewed not as a phenomenon that is produced by men as the result of social relations, but as something external to society and that would be a kind of independent variant. The social behavior would then be explained as the result of a culture and not the other way round." Oliven, *A Antropologias de Groupos Urbanos,* 24.

[74] Oliven, *A Antropologias de Groupos Urbanos,* 24.

rural environment."[75] In the church's understanding of the urban, then, the city creates 'an urban culture' marked by these characteristics.

The question one could raise at this point is this: how do the missional thinkers of the church account for the complexity of *favelas* studied in the first chapter in terms of relational culture, public religious expressions, and social and spatial diversity? To put it bluntly, by defining social and religious reality in the city according to the "urban culture" postulated by the folk-urban continuum theory, the missional leaders fail to account for the complexity of *favelas.* The only references to *favelas* made by the missional thinkers appear when they list the problems of urbanization. In the material under consideration there are in fact two references to *favelas,* one by Neitzel and another by Augusto Kircheim, who will be referenced later. In both cases, *favela* is listed with a series of problems of urbanization to emphasize how difficult life has become in the city as the result of urbanization. This is another characteristic of the folk-urban continuum theory. Since the theory holds a negative, pessimistic view of urbanization and life in the city, *favelas* come to be seen as a housing problem that exemplifies the problem of urbanization. This is implicit in Oliven's use of the term "the problem of *favelas*," when he shows the consequences of these theories in one's view of poverty and marginalization in the city in his book about urbanization, referenced in the first chapter.[76]

To understand this neglect of *favelas* in the urban missiology of the church it is important to note how closely related the folk-urban continuum theory is to the traditional-modern continuum theory that underlies the representations of *favelas* analyzed in chapter one. The difference between these theories is that the traditional-modern one is positive about urban life,

[75] Augusto Kircheim, "As Portas da Cidade," *Vox Concordiana* 15, no. 15 (2000): 36–59.

[76] Oliven, *Urbanização e Mudança Social,* chap. 3.

as it envisions progress after the model of European cities. The folk-urban theory, on the other hand, creates a negative view of the city, as it focuses on what is lost with the moving from the rural to the urban environment. The former causes the binary opposition city versus *favelas* because *favelas* are posed in contrast to the qualities of the modern city. The latter leads to the erasure of *favelas* from the city scape on the one hand, since their dwellers do not cultivate the characteristics of the "urban culture" along the lines of this theory, or to the view that they embody the problems of urbanization on the other, since the theory holds a negative view of the city. This second theory, as just demonstrated, underlies the definitions of the urban by the missional leaders of the IELB.

When it comes to the continuity between the two theories, this continuity resides in that both are based on the same historicist view of reality—the linear progressive view of time that causes the neglect of the spatial dimension of life or the subordination of this dimension to the temporal dimension of life. As shown in the first chapter, through the lens of time only, one's perspective is too limited to perceive the distinctive spatial qualities of *favelas*; it fails to see that such a built environment shapes and is shaped by how their dwellers value interpersonal relationships, for instance. In light of the present chapter and how the folk-urban theory informs the definitions of the city above, one could say that *favelas'* cultural dynamics tend to be neglected, as they do not fit the supposed "urban culture."

This understanding of the city in terms of creating an "urban culture" (in the singular) and the resulting neglect of *favelas'* cultural dynamics may help explain why, even after these developments at urban missiology, the pastors working in *favelas* have not been able to engage their cultural settings with their congregations. Rev. Nogueira, for instance, believes that the IELB no longer has a 'rural culture' in the city, but he still affirms that "acculturation" has been

a big challenge for IELB's congregations in Rio. Rev. Rômulo is even more explicit in affirming this problem: "we are stuck in between the two… We have a work hindered by the fact that we have neither a rural mentality nor an urban one." It is important to recall that in this recent attempt at urban missiology the missional leaders have talked about the importance of abandoning the rural way of being church, stressed a theological theme (the Incarnation) that could guide the adaptation of the church to new contexts and tried to understand the urban environment. And yet, this section shows that this understanding is hindered by the lens through which they have looked at the city. As a result, the few congregations and pastors who are trying to do work in *favelas* have not been able to 'acculturate' or to operate with an 'urban mentality' that speaks to the reality of *favelas.* In this way, the urban missiology of the IELB at this point fails to offer an understanding that leads to real adaptation to the urban context, which was also a problem with the previous mission model.

In part, this limitation to answer the challenges of *favelas* at the level of culture results from the lens of time. As it was just shown, the lens of time underlies the folk-urban continuum theory, which presupposes a reductionist understanding of culture in which the passing of time leads to the urbanization of societies and urbanization leads to an "urban culture" that has negative consequences. Therefore, what this section reveals is that the definitions of the urban by the missional thinkers of the IELB rely on the same time-centered view of reality discussed in the first chapter, which falls short to account for the complexity of the urban setting as far as spatiality is concerned. As a result, the urban missiology of the church does not account for the urban complexity of *favelas.*

The understanding of cities and the reality of *favelas* through the lens of place along with the cultural dynamics identified in *favelas* through the same lens can help the church understand

Brazilian cities and the complexity of *favelas* in a richer and better way. This understanding can help congregations and pastors overcome the challenges related to culture pointed out in this chapter.

Conclusion

The urban missiology of the IELB has attempted to answer the challenges of Brazilian metropolises. As it was shown in this chapter, the recent developments in the missiology of the IELB have attempted to overcome the rural orientation of the church in terms of ecclesiology and missiology. This attempt entails a helpful recognition of a certain rural captivity in terms of church culture, a significant theological emphasis on the *Missio Dei* model of missions and its presupposed theocentric orientation, and the pursuit of understanding Brazilian cities.

But this answer to the Brazilian urban challenges has been hindered by the definitions of the urban offered by the missional thinkers of the IELB. As it was demonstrated, their definitions are informed by the folk-urban continuum theory, which is based on the same linear, progressive view of time that causes a neglect of the spatial dimension of life shown in the first chapter. This theory, as shown in the present chapter, also postulates an understanding of culture in which an "urban culture" is understood to emerge as the mere result of urbanization, neglecting the cultural exchange between people groups and between people and their environments. The consequences of these definitions are that, on the one hand, this 'urban culture,' defined in terms of individualism and secularism, erases *favelas* from the church's missional landscape. As a result, it leads the church to rely on a mission strategy that fails to reach out to people beyond those who are already members of congregations. Therefore, in defining the urban this way, the urban missiology of the church fails to offer a lens that can potentially help pastors and congregations to engage their cultural context and to 'acculturate.'

This shows that another lens is necessary to offer an understanding that accounts for the complexity of Brazilian metropolises and the reality of *favelas.* The first chapter was my first step toward this goal as I used the lens of place to understand this reality. What is still to be developed is how this perspective of place has been treated in theological discussions. To analyze these discussions can help one visualize possible ways by which the IELB can appropriate a theology of place for the purpose of its urban missiology. Such an appropriation will bring a complementary theological argument for affirming an engaged presence in the city, accounting for the reality of *favelas.*

CHAPTER THREE

THE TURN TO SPATIALITY AND THE SCHOOL OF THE EVERYDAY BUILT ENVIRONMENT: REJECTING ESCAPISM AND AFFIRMING PRESENCE AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE CITY FOR THOSE IN NEED

Introduction

The lens of place has recently become an important analytical and constructive tool in theology. Out of a concern with a certain neglect of the spatial dimension of life in (philosophy and) theology, theologians from different Christian traditions have developed the newly-called theologies of place. The school of the everyday built environment, the specific theology of place that this dissertation appropriates, speaks to urban space and to theological and ecclesial engagement in the city, as far as the topic of this dissertation is concerned.[1] But before describing this specific school of thought, it is important to understand the cultural-philosophical context out of which this theological attention to place arose.

The Importance of Spatiality in Recent Developments in Academia

Theologies of place can be understood as part of the broader philosophical turn toward spatiality, which began when attention was given to social-spatial urban issues in the decades following WW II in academia, the so called "spatial turn."[2] This growing interest in the spatial dimension of life started in the second half of the twentieth century. For Edward Soja, a

[1] The school of the everyday built environment offers also a public theology that aims at dialoguing with urbanists and responding to urban ethical issues. The urban issues this school raises and the theological responses it offers will have to be selected for the particular purpose of appropriating those elements that serve as a better lens to understand Brazilian metropolises and to form an urban missiology that attends to the reality of *favelas*. This means that some important points this school makes will be left out because, although they are helpful for the public theology part of the books that represent the school, they are not as important for an urban missiology of a church that has a peculiar trajectory and concerns that differs from the representatives of this school.

[2] The term "spatial turn" is ascribed to geographer and urban theorist Edward Soja. Edward Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

representative of this development, the 1960s "saw explosive urban unrest spread around the world and from the ruble of ashes grew a revolutionary new way to think about space and the power of urban spatiality on urban behavior and societal development."[3] At that time, French social theorists[4] noticed that modern metanarratives[5] implied a linear, evolutionary view of time that shaped the building up and tearing down of public spaces and places for the benefit of only part of the urban populations. As a result, the less-economically favored had to face exclusion and displacement.[6] For example, consider the situation described in chapter 1 wherein many Brazilians in Southeastern metropolises were displaced, leading to the emergence and increase of *favelas*. This criticism among French philosophers was actually part of a much larger shift, later called the "ethics of alterity," initiated by Emanuel Levinas. The ethics of alterity was a response to Western hegemonic discourses that suppressed "difference" and caused the oppression of the "other." The other could be the colonized native of a European colony or the minority groups within Western societies themselves, whose cultures were said to have been suppressed or even destroyed as the result of their encounter with Western culture. This concern then created a certain cultural sensibility and academic attention to issues of poverty and marginality, resulting

[3] Edward W. Soja, "Talking About Space Personally," in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, eds. Barney Warf and Santa Arias (New York: Routledge, 2009), 11–35.

[4] These are some of these thinkers along with their respective works that represent the spatial turn: Michel Foucault, "Des Espace Autre (1967)," *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, n. 5 (October 1984): 47–49. See also Michel de Carteau, *L'invention du quotidien, tome 1: Arts de faire (1980),* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

[5] The term "metanarrative" does not mean the biblical grand narrative. In the context of this scholarly conversation, the term means an account of reality that claims to have universal validity by virtue of its reason-based epistemology and its (claimed) capacity to describe reality as it is (ontology), and as it should be (ethics). This is basically how another French philosopher, Jean-François Lyotard, uses 'metanarrative' in that same decade, in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Bryan Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

[6] Philip Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City: Theology, Spirituality, and the Urban* (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 13.

in an academic focus upon urban social-spatial issues.[7] The reason this is important is that, while the theorization that emerges from these developments pays special attention to spatiality, it has a lot to say about humanity and how the human to human relationship can sometimes denigrate God's human creatures.

With time, the scholarly conversation focused on spatiality became more nuanced, leading to different approaches to space and place. These approaches have been helpfully categorized by British spatial theorist Kim Knott into two major categories. In an article entitled *Religion, Space, and Place: The Spatial Turn in Research on Religion*, Knott makes a distinction between the *phenomenologist* and the *social constructivist* approaches to space and place.[8]

These two approaches can be understood in light of the responses they offer to the two 'modern problems' they attempt to overcome, namely, the "Cartesian worldview" and the "historicist hegemony," respectively. A brief overview of these two problems and how these approaches respond to them helps one understand this development, providing a context out of which theologies of place can be understood and showing how these developments can speak to the very reality of Brazilian cities.

The Phenomenologist Approach to Space and Place

The phenomenologist approach (also called "the poetic approach") to space and place is characterized by an emphasis on place as a basic condition of human existence. This means that representatives of this approach are primarily interested in the fact that we are "placed beings,"

[7] For more on the "ethics of alterity," see Robert Eaglestone, "Postmodernism and Ethics Against the Metaphysics of Comprehension," in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*, ed. Steven Connor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 182–195. For more on the relations between the ethics of alterity and spatiality, see Jane M. Jacobs, "(Post) Colonial Spaces," in *The Spaces of Postmodernity*, eds. Michael J. Dear, and Steven Flusty (Malden: Blackwell, 2002), 192–99.

[8] Kim Knott, "Religion, Space, and Place: The Spatial Turn in Research on Religion," *Religion and Society Advances in Research* 1 (2010): 29–43.

which implies that one cannot escape or transcend one's local situatedness in the world. Terms like "placedness," "being placed," and "rootedness" are a common parlance among today's representatives of this approach, like humanist geographers Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph, and philosophers of place Edward Cassey and Jeff Malpas.[9] The major philosophical problem addressed by the phenomenologist approach is the so-called "Cartesian worldview." This view refers to a way of thinking initiated by René Descartes which created a separation between individuals and their surrounding environment.

As theologian Geofrey Lilburne explains, in the Cartesian worldview, one distinguishes thinking beings [humans and God] from extended [physical] beings and creates a separation between the two. This separation corresponds to the dichotomization between the mind and the external world or "the Cartesian choice between Matter and Mind as two entirely separate forms of substance," to put it in the words of philosopher of place Edward Cassey.[10] People and their contexts along with the network of relations implied in these contexts are then seen as having little or no significance for who we are and for how humans come to acquire knowledge.[11]

The Cartesian worldview also impacts our understanding about how one can acquire knowledge, since the complete separation between matter and mind also redefines human

[9] See Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), Tuan Yi-Fu, *Space and Place: A Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), and Edward Cassey, *The Fate of Place*: *A Philosophical History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press), 1997.

[10] Cassey, *The Fate of Place,* chap. 9.

[11] This separation impacts the relation between humans and the rest of creation. For Geoffrey Lilburne, Descartes not only creates a separation between thinking beings and matter, but also overvalues the former to the detriment of the latter, which leads to the elevation of the human to the expense of the natural, created world. This then results in the exploitation of created places according to humans' unlimited desires and ambitions. This is the very point at which theologians have picked up to address ecological issues in theological reflection about place, which will be explained shortly. Geoffrey R. Lilburne, *A Sense of Place: A Christian Theology of the Land,* (Nashville: Abington, 1988), 74, 75. See also Norman Wirzba, *From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving the World,* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 43–45.

subjectivity. In this re-definition, the self, the subject knower, is isolated from her or his place and context and reduces everything that is "other" to an object to be known. Thus, because this object is a separate, distinct reality, it has no influence on how the mind processes information and acquires knowledge. In other words, the places where people find themselves and their implied network of relationships are of little or no importance in the constitution of human subjectivity and the acquisition of knowledge. On the contrary, the pursuit of knowledge is started by an alleged detachment from the context in which one is situated. If individuals really want to know something or to acquire 'true knowledge,' while they move through space, they should not be affected by the particular places of daily life.

This separation between individuals and their surrounding reality initiated a methodological tradition that is called into question by Heideggerian phenomenology, which underlies the phenomenologist approach to place. Informed therefore by Martin Heidegger's understanding of human beings in terms of *Dasein* ("being there," in the world), the phenomenologist approach has stressed the relationality between people and their surrounding environments as the result of their locally-situated presence in the world.[12] The implication of this for the acquisition of human knowledge is that not only its pursuit but also any question about human existence or about God emerges from human embeddedness in spatiality, from one's being in the world in a particular geographic place.[13] This point is important because, as anticipated in chapter one, for the church to get to know a *favela*, one cannot rely on a map based upon scientific methods of description; it does not help because of the particular topographic,

[12] For more on the importance of place in Heidegger's thinking, see Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (London: MIT 2006).

[13] For more on this, see how geographer Tim Cresswell explains the phenomenologist approach in Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

spatial characteristics of *favelas.* In chapter five this point will be discussed again.

The phenomenologist approach to place has informed studies on ecological issues, on human dwelling, and on the importance of reclaiming a sense of place in today's globalized world, just to mention a few. This approach has influenced all schools of thought within theologies of place, as it will be seen shortly.

But the emphasis of the phenomenologist approach to place as an *a priori* condition for human existence has been challenged by those who argue that place is contested and socially constructed, which configures the constructivist approach to place.

The Constructivist Approach to Place

The Constructivist approach to place is critical of the phenomenologist one. For constructivists, like Doreen Massey and David Harvey, to emphasize place in terms of human essence may lead to a neglect of the fact that spaces and places are socially constructed and that there are ethical issues of place to be addressed. For constructivists, the former approach neglects that the construction of an emplaced identity also creates boundaries of exclusion and the oppression of minorities. To merely approach *favelas* as ways of being situated means that one does not attend to how these *favelas* were constructed as part of a larger social system and what that construction means in terms of issues of power, justice, and the formation of identity.

Since their major focus is oriented toward ethics, these authors offer an important criticism of what Massey calls "problematic senses of place."[14] Because place is socially constructed, there are social ways of justifying the construction that is done. As these forms of justification become internalized by a people (part of their being situated in a place), the power dynamics that gave

[14] Doreen Massey, *A Global Sense of Place,* in T. Barnes and D. Gregory, eds., "Reading Human Geography," (London: Arnold, 1997): 315–23.

rise to these constructions are lived in but no longer seen. For example, Tim Cresswell, another spatial thinker, argues that "national Governments and cultural elites are often keen to root a sense of national identity in a historical story of where it has come from and where it is going… Often these histories are very selective and exclude the experiences of more recent arrivals ["the other"]."[15] Thus, stories that show how "the place is authentically rooted in history" become means by which "boundaries of exclusion" are normalized for people.[16] Metanarratives are told in a way that privileges only part of the urban populations.

To understand this criticism, it is important to grasp how these authors see the modern problem of historicism. In their view, the modern Western philosophical tradition has fostered what Soja calls the nineteenth-century "historicist hegemony." This term is used to refer to the dominance of historicism as the main lens to interpret reality in the nineteenth century: "historicist thought linearized time and marginalized space by positing the existence of temporal 'stages' of developments, a view that portrayed the past as the progressive, inexorable ascent from savagery to civilization, simplicity to complexity, primitiveness to civilization, and darkness to light."[17] In the problematic sense of place above, built spaces and places can be maintained or rebuilt (with new boundaries) in a certain way according to the historical story one tells, even when boundaries of exclusion are maintained or created, causing, in either case, the displacement of the 'other.'

In the case of the emergence of *favelas* in particular, for instance, the historical story told by the Brazilian government would include the fact that Rio de Janeiro had been the home for

---

[15] Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction,* 73.

[16] Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction,* 72, 73.

[17] "Historicist hegemony"—Hegel and Marx are representatives of this tradition. Barney Warf and Santa Arias, eds., *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2. See also Soja, "Talking About Space and Personally," in *Warf and Arias*, 11–35.

the Portuguese Court and for the emperor successively in the 1800s, and then, in the early 1900s, Rio should become an example of progress after the model of European cities, when Brazil had just become a republic. What this metanarrative would leave out, however, was that Rio de Janeiro had also been a home for urban former slaves and former soldiers who had been promised land in the city after their services. These people then ended up displaced as the result of the urban interventions at the turn of that century. This historicist hegemony has shaped the way Brazilian cities and the reality of *favelas* came to be understood. As it was shown in the first chapter, the traditional-modern continuum theory underlying the government's understanding of *favelas* involves the very progressive view of history in terms of moving from stage to stage until society achieves the idealized city, whose model, again, is European cities. What is important to note at this point is that, for representatives of the constructivist approach, the phenomenologist approach ends up neglecting these ethical issues.

Therefore, the major ethical problems this approach addresses are related to the kind of urban displacement which results from the urban interventions of the metropolitan phenomenon in Brazil, which was described also in terms of subordination of space to time in the first chapter. As the reader can recall, progress required the tearing down and the re-building of the urban environment of Brazilian cities, and such interventions resulted in the relocation or even mere exclusion of the poor from the urban environment. This subordination of space to time that causes these kinds of ethical issues are some of the very problems addressed by the spatial turn begun in the 1960s. Issues of this nature are the very target of the constructivist approach, and its representatives understand that the phenomenologist approach overlooks such place-related issues.

"But," one could ask, "are the concerns and proposals of the two schools necessarily

mutually exclusive?" The answer to this question would be 'no.' Jeff Malpas, for instance, argues that, "place is partially elaborated in relation to orderings deriving from individual subjects and from underlying physical structures. However, this does not legitimate the claim that place, space and time are *merely* [original emphasis] social constructions."[18] Notice that although Malpas represents the phenomenologist approach, he is not denying that, in part, place results from the "orderings deriving from individual subjects." Cresswell, after analyzing proposals of authors who represent both schools, including Malpas', concludes that it is "because place is so primal to human existence that it becomes such a powerful political force in its socially constructed forms."[19] In other words, place can be discussed in a way that both proposals are brought together: place is a basic condition for human life since we are locally situated beings, and place is the result of people groups' interaction with their surrounding physical reality, since we are cultural beings as well.

Assuming this compatibility of the two approaches, theologies of place have avoided setting the insights of both schools against each other. Rather, these theologies have engaged in dialogue with both the phenomenologist and the social constructivist approaches.

The Emergence and Development of Theologies of Place

In 1977, Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann engaged this spatial turn in his work, *the Land*. As Brueggemann begins his work, he situates his scholarship in both social theory and biblical theology. *The Land* was written as a response to the felt "sense of rootlessness"[20] in modern society and to offer a contribution to the then "redefinition of categories of biblical

[18] Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (London: Routledge, 1999), 35–36.

[19] Cresswell, *An Introduction to Place*, 50.

[20] Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), Preface to the 1st edition, Kindle.

theology."[21] To look at these two aspects is important because both are relevant for the development of theologies of place and, in particular, for theological studies of the urban built environment. Brueggemann identifies a limited approach to the Scriptures in the field of biblical theology as a factor that caused the neglect of space in theology and shows how this problem has affected Christians' view of the urban reality. In addition, he brings together the two schools of philosophy of place and opens up the possibility for further exploration of issues of place in the urban environment, although he speaks primarily to the ecological, agrarian crises.

Let us first look at the problem Brueggemann identifies in biblical theology and how this affects one's view of the city. Brueggemann criticizes one of the most dominant models of Old Testament interpretation of the twentieth century because it downplayed the significance of spatiality in theology.[22] The main representative of this model is Gerhard von Rad. In his model, Brueggemann argues, there was a rejection of space-related categories in biblical studies due to a conceptual separation between time and space as binary oppositions, and a theological bias against the latter concept and its referent. This bias consisted of associating space, which stood for the natural, created places with pagan gods and myths, while time and history were said to be the means by which Israel represented God's acts and relationship with them. In Brueggemann's opinion, the major problem at issue was that, "the identification of time categories as peculiarly

[21] Brueggemann, *The Land*, Preface to the 1st edition.

[22] In von Rad's own words: "the Old Testament writings confine themselves to representing Jahweh's relationship to Israel and the world in one aspect only, namely as a continuing divine activity in history." Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G Stalker (Endingurgh: Oliver& Boyd, 1962), 1:106. The cultural context out of which von Rad's reading of the Old Testament was first presented is also very instructive. In an essay on creation and Old Testament theology, Brueggemann makes the point that von Rad's essays on Old Testament and creation theology in the years following the Barmen Declaration (1934) need to be understood as a response to the natural religion of "Blood and Soil." In his own words, "von Rad's cultural context caused him to pose the question as he did, because Canaanite Baal religion with its accent on fertility was easily paralleled with 'Blood and Soil' religion in Germany. In so doing, he made creation a quite marginal matter in Old Testament theology, and his decision had far-reaching consequences." Walter Brueggemann, "The Loss and Recovery of Creation in Old Testament Theology," *Theology Today* 53 (1996): 177–90.

Hebraic have made interpreters insensitive to the preoccupation of the Bible for placement."[23] Brueggemann was showing that theology to some extent, like philosophy, also had neglected the spatial dimension of life.

The relation of this neglect of spatiality in biblical theology to the urban reality is not fully explored by Brueggemann but still present in his work. Brueggemann associates that which he calls the problem of rootlessness with the failed promises of the modern idea of urban progress. One of the major representatives of this idea is Harvey Cox, whose work is one of the targets of Brueggemann. Cox's *The Secular City* is an example of a time-centered theology that embraces certain qualities of the modern city that downplay the significance of particular places in people's lives.[24] Published twelve years before Brueggemann's book came out, *The Secular City* argues that there are three major stages or periods in human history as regards human inhabitation and human interaction with one another—the periods of the tribe, of the town, and of the technopolis or modern, secular city. This third period is defined basically in terms of freedom, mobility, anonymity, and secularity. These characteristics then should be embraced by Christians because they supposedly represent the realization of a process initiated by the Scriptures' authors. This process would have started when the biblical narrative distinguished between Creator and creation in the creation story and continued throughout the narrative because in its unfolding the biblical authors avoided limiting God's dominance or lordship to a specific geographic space (as was the case with pagan gods). For Cox, these biblical instances

[23] Brueggemann, *The Land,* 3.

[24] Cox's work is relevant here not only because it instantiates an idea of "urban progress" but also because the book presupposes a theology extremely oriented by a philosophy of time. Also, it is revealing the fact that Cox's biblical reading is highly dependent upon von Rad's biblical theology; many of his biblical quotes and interpretations are followed by footnotes to von Rad. In addition, both von Rad and Cox affirmed the secularization of space and place as something that is biblically based. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 6.

mark the beginning of a demystification process that results, at the end of this process, in a secular society in which individuals' freedom is one of or the greatest value(s). It is important to note that Cox's time-centered theology is very closely related to the time-based sociological lens that has been used to understand Brazilian cities and *favelas* in particular (shown in the first chapter). As just recalled, the traditional-modern continuum theory postulates a linear, evolutionary view of time that situates societies at different points of the continuum according to certain characteristics, which include the degree of secularity and detachment from tradition and community bonds. In this sociological view, *favelas* would be a kind of habitation from a very distant past, and their dwellers would be portrayed as barbarous, uncivilized, dangerous people. Cox does not go that far when talking about differences between societies, but he does offer a view that legitimizes this kind of sociological reading theologically. This shows that, at the emergence of theologies of place, there was a strong concern for urban issues similar to those which form the challenge which the IELB has to face in attempting to form an urban missiology to account for the reality of *favelas.*

It is also important to note that Brueggemann is bringing together the concerns of the two philosophical schools of place. He identifies a certain historicism in theology (the major problem for the constructivist school) that leads to the devaluation of particular places and an attempt to escape one's locally situated presence in the world (the problem identified by the phenomenologist school). This escape results in a strong individualism. But to limit Brueggemann's concern to individualism in general would miss an important point that he makes. For him, the qualities of the modern city (defined in terms of freedom, mobility, anonymity, and secularity) foster a certain way-of-life detached from the places of everyday life and a certain indifference toward community life based on geographic proximity; it is indifferent

to the relatedness of or network of relationships intrinsic to place (affirmed by phenomenologists). Thus, this way-of-life leads to an indifference to the needs of those (geographically) closest to us, those with whom we share a common street, neighborhood or city. Such a neglect may easily cause an indifference toward urban injustices (the constructivist major concern).

How does Brueggemann then respond to all these problems? First, consider how he responds to the problem in biblical studies. Here, Brueggemann offers a correction to the conceptual problem. In focusing on the land, a spatial category, Brueggemann refers to the land as a 'place' (rather than space) and defines it in a way that brings the two supposedly opposite concepts (time/space) together.[25] In the author's words, "Place is space that has historical meaning, where some things have happened that are now remembered and that provide continuity and identity across generations."[26] Notice that the solution Brueggemann offers is not an affirmation of the spatial dimension of life to the detriment of the temporal dimension, which would have represented a denial of the historical aspect of the biblical narrative. What he does is bring time and space together under the category of place. To some extent then Brueggemann undoes the binary opposition he identified in Von Rad's model of interpretation while still maintaining a certain continuity with the model.

Now, consider how Brueggemann responds to the problem of rootlessness in modern society, a response that can be related to further developments and to the school of theology of place focused on the city. In the beginning of his book (already on page 4), Brueggemann defines

[25] In the *Preface* to the second edition of *The Land* (2002), Brueggemann recalls that at the time of the publication of the first edition of his book (1977), there was a "diminishing of the accent on 'God's Mighty Deeds in History.' This diminishment entailed as well the end of the old dichotomies that had been so prominent in the field between 'history and nature,' 'time and space.'" Brueggemann, *The Land*, Preface to the 2nd edition.

[26] Brueggemann, *The Land*, Preface to the 2nd edition.

place in contrast to the characteristics of the modern city: "It [place] is a declaration that our humanness cannot be found in escape, detachment, absence of commitment, and undefined freedom."[27] This clearly contrasts the celebrated freedom, mobility, and anonymity of the modern city. Therefore, when Brueggemann describes the land in terms of place and argues that the biblical narrative is to a great extent about placement, he is saying that Christians should, in contrast to Cox's argument, embrace a way-of-life that values community, belonging, commitment and limits (to their freedom). This is how Brueggemann answers the problem of indifference toward geographic community. If rootlessness implies indifference toward geographic community and lack of commitment toward those with whom one shares a common place, placedness leads to commitment toward others. Therefore, in *The Land,* the affirmation of our humanness in terms of being rooted or placed leads to ethical concerns or solidarity toward others. For Brueggemann, being locally situated or placed leads to acting toward the neighbor—a combination of the two emphases of both philosophical schools of place.

The clearest example of these two emphases put together in theological terms can be seen when Brueggemann talks about an "unexpected unacceptable vocation" that God gave Israel by placing them in the midst of other nations in exile.[28] He recalls that the Israelites felt a certain alienation for being out of place or dislocated during exile in Babylon. Right there, however, God addressed his people with his word and told them: "Build houses and live in them… seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to Yahweh on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare (Jer. 29:5–7)."[29] Note that this speaks directly to the importance of geographic proximity for the exercise of faithful service in the world.

---

[27] Brueggemann, *The Land,* chap. 1.

[28] Brueggemann, *The Land,* chap. 1.

[29] Brueggemann, *The Land,* chap. 7.

Brueggemann is saying that the Christian does not chose whom she or he will serve. To put it in other words for the present purpose: wherever God has placed the church, that is where it has a call to build interpersonal relationships and serve. Therefore, to be placed implies to have a purpose which involves attention to the people and their needs, those with whom the church shares a common place, be it a village or street, a neighborhood or a city. This point is important for the theology of place this dissertation appropriates and for thinking about forming an urban missiology, and so it will receive more attention later.

Brueggemann' argument, in addition, is significant because the way he addresses land-related agrarian issues opens up the possibility for speaking to urban issues of urbanization and place. Brueggemann's ethical concern is directed primarily toward the environmental crisis. *The Land* was first published about 10 years after Lynn White's essay, *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,* and so Brueggemann engages the theological debate the essay started.[30] Brueggemann himself describes how his argument enters this scenario:

> As long as Old Testament interpretation was preoccupied with ad hoc "historical events," the issue of environment could hardly be noticed. But once attention is payed to '*eres* (land, earth) as God's creation and it is recognized that life in the land must be lived in conformity with the creator's intention, then the care for or abuse of creation is readily recognized as a biblical and theological concern.[31]

Notice therefore that issues of place, in Brueggemann's view, can now be considered as of theological concern, as a result of his argument. By showing the biblical concern for placement, Brueggemann opens a door for further exploration of land-related urban issues.

---

[30] In this essay, the technology that Cox welcomes in his book about the city is for White part of the Ecological problem. The author argues that a "marriage between science and technology" deeply affected the environment. In addition, for White the ultimate root of the environmental crisis (in the 1960s) resides in the Christian teaching that humans have dominion over all creation. He argues that Christians have read Genesis in an anthropocentric way, placing themselves far above the natural, created world, which lead many Christians to interpret the gift of dominion as a right to exploit creation. Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–07.

[31] Brueggemann, *The Land*, Preface to the 1st edition.

To notice how Brueggemann paves the way for exploring the urban reality from the perspective of place, one needs to observe that Brueggemann intends to speak not only to land-related injustices, but also to urban ones. Since Brueggemann speaks primarily to ecological and agrarian debates, the ethical issues he addresses regard agrarian land policies primarily. Still, he mentions the fact that agrarian issues have a counterpart urban issue. For instance, at one point of his argument, Brueggemann criticizes the "modern practice of enclosure"—the enclosure of land favoring those in power—which "separated land policy from social interconnectedness."[32] Then later Brueggemann mentions the urban counterpart of this practice when he says that his argument about the biblical concern for placement should lead people to rethink the idea of urban progress, which "claims the right to relocate and reassign people, to move them from storied place to history-less space. And in new ways urbanization will need to focus on the presence of stories for humanness and the difference between trusted place and coerced space."[33] Notice that Brueggemann is talking about the kind of urban issue identified by the constructivist school and, in particular, to a kind of displacement similar to that which has happened in Brazil, resulting in the emergence and increase of *favelas.* This shows how Brueggemann's work, while primarily engaged in biblical theology and speaking at first to the ecological, agrarian debate of the second half of the twentieth century, opens up the possibility for speaking to urban issues from the perspective of a theology of place. His concerns with the disregard for geographic community and with urban displacement, both reflected in the urban built environment, are then left for further exploration by a theology of place that speaks to these urban issues.

Those who followed the way paved by Brueggemann's work started referring to their

[32] Brueggemann, *The Land,* chap. 11.

[33] Brueggemann, *The Land,* chap. 12.

works as theologies or Christian views of place. These theologies in general follow Brueggemann's articulation of time and space (as spatiality) and distinguish place from space (as physical reality). Also, informed by a variety of disciplines,[34] these theologies affirm the significance and role of particular places in human life and spirituality in general and seek theologically to reclaim the physicality and relationality of the Christian faith in particular, for which the starting point is the church's presence in the world. The reclaiming of this physicality and relationality implies an affirmation of our creatureliness in terms of embodied human creatures. As embodied creatures, by necessity we are locally situated in the world and find ourselves within a network of relationships—with created and built environments, with other people, and institutions, too, just to mention a few. In addition, it means that our primary way of perceiving reality is through the places we inhabit, where we worship and encounter others. It also implies that God encounters us in place, where we are. From a Lutheran perspective which will be explored in the next chapter, one does not need to be in a special, sacred place to be encountered by God with his word. Jesus Christ himself came to dwell among us at the Incarnation, and during his earthly ministry he encountered sinners both in the temple and in the villages, where they were.

In order then to affirm all this, theologians reclaim a certain emphasis on creation theology that is not limited to the etiology of the cosmos or to a view of creation as merely an event that initiated the history of the world. Creation is spoken of as an ongoing, present reality.[35]

Following his trajectory, theologians have focused on natural, created places to address

[34] These disciplines include humanist geography, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology.

[35] In the words of theologian of place Norman Wirzba, creation is "a dynamic place so cherished that God enters into covenant relationship with it (Gen. 9: 8–17), so beautiful that God promises to renew it (Isa. 65: 17–25), and so valuable that God takes up residence within it (John 1:14; Rev. 21:1–4)." Wirzba, *From Nature to Creation*, 21.

ecological and agrarian issues, on Christian practices that recover a sense of place for Christian spirituality, and on built places under the category theology of the (everyday) built environment. The first school, represented by scholars such as Jeffrey Lilburne and Norman Wirzba, is particularly concerned with ecological and agrarian issues. They try to overcome a distorted view of creation that results from the Cartesian worldview, a view that places humans far above other creatures. They draw on Brueggemann's concern for land-related ethical issues and usually interact with Lynn White and his respondents. The school tries to recover a Christian view of the relationship between humans and the rest of creation by drawing primarily on the phenomenologist approach.[36] The second school, represented by scholars such as John Inge and Craig Bartholomew, stresses the importance of particular places in the world as key to religious experience. They try to overcome a modernity's eclipse of the significance of place with the purpose of affirming place for spirituality. This second school is highly critical of (sometimes even reactionary to) globalization. Its representatives usually argue that globalization fosters homogeneous space rather than places. They also usually affirm that some places in the world have something of a special quality or special ontological status, in the sense of serving as meeting places between humans and the divine.[37] This second school is also strongly informed by the phenomenologist approach. Notice that none of these schools pick up on Brueggemann's underdeveloped response to urban issues of displacement. The school that speaks to the urban issues Brueggemann raises is yet another, third school, the school of the (everyday) built

[36] See Lilburne, *A Sense of Place: A Christian Theology of the Land* (1988), Wirzba, *From Nature to Creation* (2015), and Craig G. Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell: A Christian View of Place for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011). Bartholomew, given the comprehensiveness of his work, speaks also to other schools. Yet another author who could be situated within this school is Wendell Berry, as suggested by Brueggemann. In *The Land* he footnotes this essay: Wendell Berry, *The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural* (San Francisco: North Point, 1981).

[37]See John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place*, (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003).

environment.

The school of the (everyday) built environment addresses Brueggemann's underdeveloped response to urban issues. Brueggemann had even mentioned the possibility of reconceiving urbanization as an outcome of his argument.[38] He opened up the possibility of addressing urban issues of displacement with theology of place, but he left it undeveloped, and neither of the schools described above develop this further. It is only in the early-2000s that theologian Tim Gorringe picks up where Brueggemann left off and initiates a conversation that speaks to the kinds of social injustices related to the problem of urban displacement. This school addresses both individualism that results in a neglect of geographic community, a problem fostered by the modern city and the urban social-spatial divisions. In addition, it speaks to urban spatiality and offers a theological response that aims at fostering presence and engagement in the urban context. These points will help to develop missiological strategies that respond to the complexity of *favelas* in Brazilian metropolises.

Overview of the Theology of the Everyday Built Environment

This school is helpful to understand the complexity of Brazilian metropolises and to account for the reality of *favelas*. A basic presupposition of this school is that built space "is a physical entity as well as a socially and historically constructed place, which constantly interacts with human behavior, thinking and feeling."[39] Notice how both the phenomenologist and the constructivist approaches inform this definition. One can see the phenomenological emphasis in the description of how a built space "interacts with human behavior, thinking, and feeling" and

[38] Brueggemann, *The Land,* chap. 12.

[39] Sigurd Bergmann, ed., *Theology in Built Environments: Exploring Religion, Architecture and Design* (New Jersey: Transaction, 2009).

one can see the constructivist emphasis in the description of built spaces as "socially and historically constructed." This is important for the theological study of urban missiology in Brazil for many reasons.

First, this interaction implies that different kinds of built environment can foster different cultures and, in turn, different cultures in a single city can create an urban spatial diversity. This is the case with Brazilian metropolises. To understand Brazilian cities as being culturally diverse is important to avoid the kind of representation of Brazilian cities that exclude *favelas* from the cityscape. Second, considering space as socially and historically constructed is important because there is a tendency in Brazilian society in general to see the modernization of cities as a mere natural course of history. Those who see the urban interventions that caused the displacement of people in this way usually deny that there is any ethical problem involved in such developments; one just sees necessary consequences of the course of history. This is one way in which ethical problems are normalized for people. The constructivist school, in contrast, stresses that all urban built space, not only those of the poor, are the result of social and historical construction. This recognition should lead one to recognize the possibility that injustices may be committed against the poor, which requires the church's attention and response. Third, this serves as a reminder that the rural built environment shaped the church in the past as much as the church culture shaped that environment. Such an insight is important because, now, being in a new, urban environment, the church seems to be out of place or dislocated and ends up seeing the church's property as a 'less complicated space' where fidelity to the church's heritage can be better preserved. What this school's definition presupposes, in contrast, is that to shape and to be shaped by the surrounding environment is just part of what it means to be an embodied creature in the world. The question then to be asked would be this: Is this recognition something to be

embraced or a situation from which the church should try to escape? This school helps answer this question.

To recognize this exchange between people and place—a recognition that humans are shaped by and shape their places—is important also in terms of the cultural theory that serves as the backdrop for this dissertation in theology and culture. In Kevin Vanhoozer's *Everyday Theology*, he defines culture as "works and worlds of meaning."[40] This definition highlights the dynamic exchange between culture as a product of human activity (works of meaning) and culture as a framework for human activity (worlds of meaning). This understanding of cultural formation, therefore, challenges the understanding that there is one single urban culture in the city; since there is a high spatial diversity in the city, it implies that there are many cultures shaping and being shaped by these built environments. To stress this understanding of culture is important because the urban missiology of the IELB has spoken about the importance of changing from a rural to an urban culture, but still has not yet reflected upon cultural formation and how exactly to cross cultural boundaries. And finally, this theological school also accounts for the social and spatial cultural exchange that takes place in *favelas* and thus helps the Lutheran church reflect on how it can take shape in these built living environments.

Also significant within these definitions is the distinction between space and place assumed by this school. Although both space and place are physical spatial realities or entities, the two need to be distinguished. For instance, one could say that a highway as a built environment is a public space, a space for mobility or transit, but it would be difficult to argue that this kind of spatial reality is a place. Place is space with boundaries that establish limits to God's human

[40] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed., *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), Introduction, Kindle.

creatures and with distinctive and special qualities—a 'qualified space,' which is shaped by and shapes people groups.[41] It is important to note that this definition is not very different from Brueggemann's, but there are a few aspects to be considered. When Brueggemann wrote his book, humanist geographers were still reacting against human interest in outer space. Although the earth was already giving signs of deterioration, instead of fixing the problems that caused such ecological issues, nations started enterprises to fly away from this place (called Earth) for other alternatives. In addition, this attempt at flight from the Earth to (infinite, outer) space was then associated to abstract concepts of space based on geometry favored by urban planners and architects at that time. In both cases, space meant for phenomenologists an escape or alienation from the physical concrete reality around us in everyday life, where one is placed in the world. This all led to a view that poses place and space (almost) in opposition to each other. Brueggemann' view that place involves an affirmation that our humanness is not found in "escape and detachment" has this debate as the background: "While pursuit of space may be a flight from history, a yearning for a place is a decision to enter history with an identifiable people in an identifiable pilgrimage."[42] But the constructivist concern with the problematic senses of place and with the fact that we might construct place and establish its boundaries in a way that creates alienation or exclusion among us led to a view that avoids setting the two concepts in stark contrast. Space for escape might sometimes mean an escape from oppression, constructivists would say. Therefore, rather than being in opposition to space, place is then viewed as derivative from space from a constructivist perspective. Brueggemann's argument

[41] For a discussion on how to define place from a phenomenologist perspective, see Jeff Malpas, "Finding Place: Spatiality, Locality, and Subjectivity," in *Philosophies of Place,* Andrew Light and Jonathan M. Smith eds., (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 21–43. For an understanding of space and place from a constructivist perspective, see Massey, "A Global Sense of Place," in Barnes and Gregory, 315–23.

caries elements of both schools, but often he speaks as if space and place are in opposition to each other. The school of the built environment assumes this constructivist understanding of place as derivative from space, but also draws insights from the phenomenologist approach. The definition above attempts to capture these aspects.

As one turns to the theology of the built environment, one sees that there are two major ways of approaching the built environment. One is more 'restricted,' while the other is more 'holistic.' The restricted approach usually focuses on particular built places or spaces individually or compares and contrasts two different kinds of built spaces (like the 'qualified space' for religious purposes and the shopping mall, for instance). This first approach usually offers semiotic analyses of cultural, religious, and architectural elements of one single building (and then compares it with the qualities of another, if that is the case). This approach is common in architectural studies of church buildings.[43]

The holistic approach looks at the built environment as a site of cultural exchange and offers analyses that integrate the many different kinds of built places and spaces found in the city.[44] Its focus is then the urban built environment, and it gives special attention to the network of relationships between the home, the neighborhood, the public places and spaces, the church building too, and even the spaces in between buildings of cities. In addition, it tries to understand

[43] The restricted approach would be helpful for this dissertation by exploring the function of the church building and its architecture in the mission of the church. In this case, how the architecture of the building could embody the biblical narrative and represent a hospitable presence within urban communities would be possible ways through which this approach would help. But, ultimately, this approach is too limited because it fails to speak to the church's presence and action in the urban context. Besides, it does not offer an understanding of the dynamics that mark Brazilian metropolises. A good example of this emphasis in this school is Bergmann, *Theology in Built Environments*. See also Eric Jacobsen's *The Space Between: A Christian Engagement with the Built Environment* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 15. Jacobsen fits in the second approach, but he offers a brief differentiation between the two.

[44] These are the authors and works that represent this approach: T. J. Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, and Redemption* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Sheldrake's *The Spiritual City*, and Eric Jacobsen, *Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Brazos), and *The Space Between*.

how this network impacts urban dwellers' lives and their interpersonal relations. This second approach, therefore, is holistic, focusing upon networks of relations and the interaction of people, built places, and spaces, and it is helpful for this dissertation because it addresses the kinds of urban issues described above and will be important for developing an ecclesial model of congregational engagement in the city (chapter IV), which will then be applied to the reality of *favelas* (chapter V).

One of the major representatives of the holistic approach in the theology of the everyday built environment is Tim Gorringe.[45] Gorringe is an Anglican priest and retired professor of theological studies at the University of Exeter, Devon, England. Gorringe taught theology in India for seven years, where he saw, in his own words, "a lot of poverty and a great deal of oppression."[46] In 2003, Gorringe wrote a book entitled *A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption.* With this book he initiates this scholarly conversation, bringing together multidisciplinary voices that speak to urban spatiality and theology. He also picks up on the urban issues that Brueggemann had left underdeveloped, the neglect of the relation between place and community, and the social-spatial divisions in the city. More importantly for this dissertation, Gorringe offers a theology of place which counters any view of the church as a safe haven to escape from the urban environment.

The Theology of Place as a Rejection of Both the View of Humanity Implicit in the Modern City and The Ecclesial Escapism from Urban Life

The school of the everyday built environment is concerned with the "ethical problems of dwelling" and the so-called "privatization of faith." These ethical problems regard two aspects—

[45] It is a consensus among representatives of this school that the first work that initiated this approach to the everyday built environment is Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*.

[46] Terence Handley MacMath, "Interview: Tim Gorringe, Professor of Theology and Religion, Exeter University," *Church Time,* August 30, 2013, https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/41844.

the issues of displacement and of social-spatial division. In order to address them, the school analyzes the urban physical built spaces and places with the purpose of overcoming the root of the problem, namely, an anthropology fostered by and embodied in the built environment of today's major Western cities. This view of humanity either creates the conditions for or relativizes these ethical problems. In their analyses, therefore, they try to reveal how the city as idealized to achieve economic progress fosters ways of life that undermine the significance of place. In addition, the school also addresses the problem of the privatization of faith; once faith is situated within the realm of one's private life only, Christians become indifferent or fail to perceive these ethical problems as it creates escapism from urban life in some way or another. Such theory is significant for the church in its communal life in the urban setting.

The Problem of Displacement, The Undermining of Geographic Community and Their Implication for Urban Missional Ecclesiology

An important part of Gorringe's book is his treatment of place as city. In his analysis of the city, Gorringe looks at the urban interventions that resulted from the urban vision of the school of architecture originating with Swiss architect and urbanist Le Corbusier. The urbanist's vision had a powerful influence in the mid-twentieth century all over Europe, in the United States, and in Brazil. His view of the city welcomes those very characteristics of the modern city which Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* legitimizes theologically. Here is a point at which the school advances what Brueggemann had left underdeveloped. Brueggemann had connected the problem of rootlessness in modern society with the idea of urban progress and the problem of urban displacement. The present school goes beyond Brueggemann by exploring how the built environment that resulted from Le Corbusier's vision created this sentiment of rootlessness. Moreover, the school shows how the anthropology fostered in the idealized modern city

downplays or relativizes the problem of displacement.

But what exact kind of built environment characterizes this architectural school and creates such sentiment and problems? Gorringe argues that the creation of ample spaces for movement or mobility is one of the major characteristics of this school. This preoccupation with transit, in addition, led to the verticalization of the city with the skyscraper and the enlargement of roads.

The problem of this built environment according to Gorringe is that it embodies a view of humanity that devalues the significance of real community life. A basic presupposition of Gorringe's book is that the built environment "embodies an anthropology and therefore a view of society."[47] Part of his purpose with his analysis is then to identify "what sort of humanity is encouraged by different types of cities."[48] He connects Le Corbusier's favoring of space for movement to the urbanist's anthropological view: "No one has made it clearer [than Le Corbusier] how architectural visions rest on a view of the human… To be human is to go on a straight line toward your goals."[49] What underlies this view of humanity always on the move, moving forward toward a goal, is the understanding that individuals and societies should always be willing or even desire to leave behind the ties of place and geographic community for the purpose of achieving individual or societal progress., even when what progress means is defined by metanarratives that neglect social and spatial realities and only part of the population gets displaced.

It is important to note at this point that, under this view of humanity, the displacement suffered by the poor to some extent is no longer viewed as a problem, because individual or societal progress is considered far more valuable than ties of place and community. In such view

[47] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 109.

[48] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 146.

[49] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 212.

of humanity, community is redefined and built on the basis of "individual self-interest and contract."[50] The end result of all this is a relativization of the ethical problem of displacement, as what matters is individuals' self-interest, which are supposedly driven toward progress or the future. Place and community built on the basis of geographic proximity then do not matter, and it is then okay if people are relocated to another area losing all community ties.

Another representative of this school, Presbyterian pastor and scholar Eric O. Jacobsen, speaks less about how the anthropology of the modern city leads to the acceptance of displacement and more about the neglect of place in community building. His field of study is the intersection between theology and urban studies. Relying more on the phenomenologist approach to place at this point, Jacobsen analyzes the built environment and makes what he calls "bodily observations about the built environment."[51] Taking into consideration then the embodied nature of human existence, he talks about how urban developments after World War II have created long distances between people. For him, one of the "unintended consequences of the automobile-oriented developments" of that period is that "it has increased the distances at which we encounter one another."[52] Jacobsen is referring to the fact that in the United States the so called zonification of cities divided them in zones or areas: the zone of living, the zone of work, and the zone of consumption (where one goes shopping). In other words, cities came to be designed to provide space for the automobile to take people across the city and ended up failing to provide spaces for face-to-face human encounter. People today come to pass by each other going to their cars in parking lots and see other people through the car's windshield primarily, which for him alters one's perception of other people. To put this in other words, cities came to

[50] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment,* 164.

[51] Jacobsen, *The Space Between,* 39.

[52] Jacobsen, *The Space Between,* 42.

be built in a way that hinders a close perception of reality, a perception that can be gained by simply walking the city.

Jacobsen also describes the consequences of these developments for interpersonal relationships. For him, the neglect of how the body experiences the city is that it "tends to decrease the intimacy that people can have with one another in their environments."[53] As a result, lack of trust in interpersonal relationships is a consequent issue, since people no longer have on-the-ground interaction or face-to-face encounters.

Therefore, for representatives of this school, today's Western cities foster a more individualistic way-of-life and neglect the importance of geographic proximity and common purposes that arise when people live and share common specific places in the construction of community. In addition, given the way cities are built, we come to see the city from a certain distance, which affects our perception. As a result of all this, the problem of displacement is to some extent downplayed and ends up being unseen or unperceived, since place and community life based on geographic proximity no longer really matter in the city.

All this is important because these problems all affect the church in some way or another. For Gorringe—and this is implicit in his chapter on "Constructing Community"—one of the negative effects is that the church as a community may be understood as a like-minded people group who can easily become insensitive to the problems of other people and might exclude the other from their midst. Notice that if this happens, the church becomes careless about the suffering of the poor and displaced ones.[54] For Jacobsen, who is concerned more with the disconnect between place and community, congregations might end up developing programs that

[53] Jacobsen, *The Space Between,* 42.

do not reach out to those neighbors living relatively close to the church building and to the members' homes. In Jacobsen's view, churches organize themselves as if geography no longer mattered at all. Presupposed in Gorringe's and Jacobsen's concern is the point that Brueggemann makes in the *Land,* namely, that being placed involves an "unexpected and unaccepted vocation" that God gives his people by placing them wherever he pleases. Therefore, both Gorringe and Jacobsen advance Brueggemann's reflection in showing that today's cities offer the conditions for neglecting place-related responsibilities toward fellow urban dwellers. Ultimately, the neglect of these responsibilities might lead to a neglect of the problem of displacement.

As far as this dissertation is concerned, there are ecclesiological and missiological implications when one reflects about the issues these theologians raise. First, to have an engaged presence in *favelas* implies the church's engagement in a place where an entire community has suffered displacement. Therefore, the church cannot ignore this ethical problem. Second, in a *favela,* place and community are not thought of as separate things. For these reasons, it is important to use a theology of the built environment to form an urban missiology that accounts for *favelas*.

Very closely related to the problem of displacement, a problem that is mitigated by an anthropology that creates a disconnect between community building and place, is the social-spatial divisions embodied in the urban built environment of today's major cities. This second aspect forms the second major object of concern among representatives of the school of the everyday built environment under their ethical concern. It is when the school treats this problem that another, theological issue is made evident, namely, the privatization of faith.

The Social-Spatial Division, the Privatization of Faith and Their Implication for Urban Missional Ecclesiology

Le Corbusier's vision of the city fostered urban interventions after World War II that created a problem of social-spatial divisions. Some aspects of this problem were unintended, but others arose from an intentional organization of urban space.

The social-spatial divisions that are unintended arose from the construction of larger roads for the automobile in the re-building of cities. Gorringe voices his criticism toward Le Corbusier's view that, "a city made for speed is made for success," which required that the urban built environment should be rebuilt accordingly. An example of this was presented in the first chapter, under the "metropolitan phenomenon." This phenomenon required the adaptation of Brazilian older metropolises to new economic ideals in 1960s. Jacobsen also voices his concern that a great deal of the urban interventions of that period favored the construction of large roads for the purpose of speed in automobile transit, facilitating the so-called suburban sprawl and resulting in the split of traditional neighborhoods. For example, consider the United States where highways sometimes divide communities and certainly provide the ease of transport so that inner cities are left empty as the population moves out to the suburbs. Jacobsen argues that, although not intended, the construction of highways enables those who can afford a house in the suburbs and a means of transport to move out, while the poor stay in the city. Jacobsen's criticism might be helpful for North American churches to understand a certain absence of the church in the inner cities. How urban divisions affects the church in Brazilian cities is going to be considered in the last chapter of this dissertation.

While this was an unintended consequence of urban development, there are also clear intentions to create cities that are divided on the basis of the social-economic conditions of the urban dwellers. Gorringe highlights the fact that Le Corbusier favored "centralized planning

based on class stratification, something that assumed antagonistic communities from the start."[55] When this way of planning the urban environment is applied where there is already a city, many people are relocated to more distant areas according to this stratification.

Philip Sheldrake, an Anglican theologian and researcher who represents the Cambridge Theological Federation (Westcott House), brought these arguments together in his work, *The Spiritual City*. As Sheldrake criticizes Le Corbusier's school, he notes that the major characteristics of Le Corbusier's architecture were "a tendency to erase the past, and a tendency to subordinate the realities of people's lives to abstract concepts of space."[56] These two points are very closely related, since this concept of space, determined by geometry and aimed at facilitating mobility through the automobile, ends up homogenizing the urban built space as an ideal and causes the displacement of the poor and social-spatial divisions, as the poor are relocated to more precarious areas.

How then exactly does all this affect the church? Sheldrake is helpful on this point. He picks up on Richard Sennett's criticism that Western cities became impersonal and "soulless" after World War II in part because of Christianity. In explaining Sennett, Sheldrake notes that, "an unbalanced *rhetoric* of interiority, which results from a reading of Augustine's two cities,[57]

---

[55] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment,* 173.

[56] Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, 107.

[57] An example of this problematic reading of Augustine is described by Gorringe in terms of what he calls a "platonising train of reflection." In this reading of Augustine's priority of the *civitas Dei,* one "relativizes the significance of what we do here." This is what the author refers to as the "relativizing of the present." The relation of this position to the issue of the time-space severance identified by spatial thinkers resides in the following explanation: Augustine privileged time to the detriment of space by stressing the superiority of the "eternal city" to be enjoyed in the future, while his present city, Rome, was under threat. This articulation, so the argument goes, helped Augustine comfort Christians at the time. But this led to a kind of abandoning of the present cities of the world. While it is debatable whether it was Augustine himself or his interpreters who came to neglect the importance of 'worldly cities' (and this debate is part of the built-environment-school conversation), what is significant for this dissertation is that his work gave rise to a tradition that relativizes the importance of the physical, present world, which is exactly the kind of problematic reading of Augustine' two cities that Sheldrake criticizes. Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 9, 10.

has had serious moral consequences because it suggests that our social or public life is of secondary importance."[58] For Sheldrake, Christians have been influenced by a (late) modern philosophical discourse, a modern metanarrative, which leads to limitations in terms of church presence or even to an escape from city, public life. Seeking "to promote a belief in the wholly private nature of religion,"[59] this "secular project'" presupposes a polarized view of life. At one end, private life is idealized as "the backstage where individuals are truly themselves,"[60] while in the public stage, at the other end, individuals play totally different roles. Although the secularization project is believed to have failed, as the author recognizes, the polarization of life—private/public—still influences Christianity. Not only does it shape Christian sensibility toward engagement in public life in the city, it also shapes how Christians integrate into the urban landscape that has been constructed within a secular frame of reference.

Referencing Sennett, Sheldrake notes that, "apart from spaces for the celebration of heritage or for consumer needs, city design has concentrated on creating safe division between different groups of people."[61] Such safe divisions are something that Christians, due to their privatization of faith, might be comfortable with. Sheldrake is not clear about whether he agrees with Sennett's point that cities were built under the influence of Christianity. But he does agree with the criticism that a Christian indifference toward city life and what he calls (after Sennett) Christianity's "fear of mixture" and its "concern for purity"[62] lead to an uncritical embrace of the characteristics of the modern city. In this understanding, a logical conclusion is that the divisions

[58] Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, 8.

[59] Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, 2.

[60] Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, 8.

[61] Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, 8

[62] Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, 10.

between people groups is viewed as safeguarding Christian groups' identities and church culture. As a result, churches end up failing to recognize the importance of crossing social-spatial boundaries for the sake of the gospel.

To summarize Sheldrake's argument for the present purpose, he is saying that, as a result of the influence of the metanarrative of secularization, Christians have undervalued the importance of public life. In addition, the social-spatial division embodied in today's cities might create the very conditions with which some Christian traditions feel comfortable due to their desire to maintain purity by the avoidance of mixture. The ecclesiological implication of all of this is an escape from urban life and a distancing from other people.

This reflection will be picked up again in the last chapter. As the reader may recall, in the early-1990s, Leonardo Neitzel had already talked about the importance of being intentional in crossing social and cultural boundaries which separate people groups in the city. But the church was failing to do it according to Neitzel's own assessment in the early–2000 (as noted in the second chapter). Therefore, the school of the everyday built environment's reflection at this point has implications for forming an urban missiology for the Brazilian context and will receive more attention in the last chapter.

Going back to how the modern metanarrative that aims at situating faith within the limits of private life influences the church, it is important to note that it brings missiological consequences to the church as well. Perhaps the best example of this problem is offered by Jacobsen's description of the "private Christians"[63] reaction to the city in his first book on the built environment. By "private Christians" the author refers to North America evangelicals who understand the Christian faith primarily in terms of a personal relationship with Jesus, emphasize

[63] Jacobsen, *Sidewalks in the Kingdom*, 49.

the Great Commission according to Matthew 28: 19–20, avoid engagement in public affairs, and take part in certain activities that are a common concern in society only for the purpose of evangelism or converting individuals. In Jacobsen's own words: "The private Christians either mistrust the city for its worldliness and its cultural power or they fail to see its relevance beyond their mandate for evangelism."[64] What Jacobsen is saying is that for certain Christian groups, there is little or no value in relating to people who are not Christians if such relationship does not involve evangelism activity. Therefore, when this school criticizes this privatization of faith that results from both concern for purity and the influence of the secular project, the school is highlighting the lack of Christian engagement in the city to answer creaturely needs. In addition, it criticizes the kind of engagement that fails to go beyond the answer to Jesus' mandate to evangelize. For this school, the private Christians' attitude represents a Protestant attitude that needs to be overcome for developing a theology that takes the built environment seriously.

Sheldrake's and Jacobsen's reflections and criticisms are very valuable for this dissertation. They show that the urban built environment is shaped by and shapes the predominant society's culture. Church practices, then, can be influenced by or accommodated to cultural developments. In regard to forming an urban missiology for the church in Brazil, the particular risk that the IELB needs to avoid is letting the social-spatial divisions or the metanarrative that privatizes faith hinder its presence and mission in *favelas*, where the perception of public and private is very different from what this metanarrative postulates. The last chapter will discuss some of the implications of these points for the church in Brazil.

In summary, the school of the everyday built environment offers critical analysis that highlights errors in missional ecclesiology. It rejects any metanarrative or cultural development

[64] Jacobsen, *Sidewalks in the Kingdom*, 50, 55.

that implies or leads to a neglect or rejection of what Gorringe calls the "homeliness of the world." Specifically, in regards to the city, the school of the everyday built environment denounces developments that foster or embody a view of humanity that relativizes the problem of displacement, separate people groups, and neglect the important vocation the church has by virtue sharing a common city with others. This is the negative critical work of this school. What about its constructive work? How does this school suggest the church should respond to these problems?

The Theology of Place as an Affirmation of Presence and Engagement in the City Shaped by an Alternative View of Humanity

In forming a response to these challenges, the school of the everyday built environment turns to the Christian tradition to find resources that make it possible to engage the urban reality theologically. Through Scripture and doctrine, representatives of this school seek to form a theological approach to the built environment. Thematically, the school emphasizes theologies of presence and engagement to address Christian approaches of absence and escape from the city.

Due to the fact that the urban built environment of today's major cities presupposes an anthropology that defines us in terms of anonymous individuals and thus impacts how people interact with one another in negative ways, the theology of place offers an alternative view of humanity from a theological perspective. This perspective re-defines who we are and is intended to lead to action against urban injustices. At the starting point of the spatial turn, theorists noted how the subordination of space to time in the attempt to modernize cities displaced and marginalized the poor. This concern with urban injustices and orientation toward action answers that concern.

The approach that will be appropriated for this dissertation is that of Gorringe. Starting with the doctrine of the Trinity, Gorringe offers an alternative view of humanity, affirming that

humans are never detached from place and its implied relationships. In addition, under this alternative view of humanity, Christians are encouraged to fight urban injustices informed by the actions of the three persons of the Trinity. As Gorringe himself explains in the introduction of his work: "I want to argue that the built environment relates to every area of Christian ethics, and that only a Trinitarian ethic, an ethic of creation, reconciliation, and redemption, is adequate to explore it."[65]

Let us first look at how this three-fold Trinitarian emphasis shapes Gorringe's approach to place. He initiates the scholarly conversation on the built environment by offering three ways of talking about place: place as land, as building (under a treatment of human dwelling), and as city. In relation to such language of place, Gorringe unfolds his Trinitarian understanding of the ethics of human engagement.

In his treatment of place as land, Gorringe affirms that this importance can be viewed not only in Genesis 12, when God promises the land to Abraham, but first and foremost in the creation narrative. According to this narrative, Gorringe recalls, we are "from the dust (*Admah*)—rooted, therefore in the soil."[66] And from this basic point, the corollary that follows is that, "This common rooting in the earth is the ground for human solidarity."[67] This solidarity is important in his argument because at this point Gorringe speaks to the very problems that Brueggemann had addressed in 1977, problems regarding the dispossession of land and the displacement of the poor. As part of Gorringe's response to this problem, for him, since we are all from the dust, rooted in the soil, land issues, be it agrarian or urban land, should be treated as of high importance, because it has to do with part of who we are, as God created us. It is

[65] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 5.

[66] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 58.

[67] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 58.

therefore primarily a matter of creation.

In his discussion of place as building under human dwelling, Gorringe asserts at the outset that, "as the most vulnerable of mammals, human beings need shelter."[68] Note that now who we are has to do not only with being rooted or placed but also with the activity of building, which answers a common human need that arises from the embodied nature of our existence. Once Gorringe establishes this basic point, he offers an account of different ways of conceiving what the ideal built environment for human dwelling should be, making the case for reconciliation through the built environment. This reconciliation consists of building cities that value and foster cultural diversity, including the characteristics of impoverished communities.[69]

It is important to note that, when Gorringe talks about reconciliation through the built environment, he is using a theological theme from his Trinitarian theology to affirm that instead of escaping the urban environment to preserve purity, Christians are to engage the built environment informed by God's action through the Son, "the Reconciler."

This reflection on the human activity of building and dwelling connects Gorringe's treatment of place as land with place as city. For Gorringe, the activity of building should always take place in a way that the natural environment is respected, but he recognizes that usually the primary criteria for how to build are economic conditions and ideals of society. Thus, he paves the way to talk about place as city and the kind of displacement and precarious inhabitations of

[68] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment,* 79.

[69] He contrasts what he calls the "vernacular tradition" with the "monumental tradition." The former, says Gorringe, represents a response to local climate conditions and to "social form and tradition." The monumental one, on the other hand, is more concerned with universal cosmic rules, like the rules of geometry. In this second tradition, Gorringe continues, buildings "overawe" or "impress" people and show the power of those who build, while in the former the primary purpose is shelter and fosters the sentiment of feeling at home. This contrast between the two traditions is important in Gorringe's argument because, on the one hand, he connects the monumental tradition to the urban interventions treated above. On the other hand, it is important because to value the vernacular tradition today opens up the possibility of appreciating different ways of building, making room for the possibility for people to appreciate spatial diversity in today's cities. Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment,* 95.

today's peripheries of major cities. Arguing for maintaining a dialectic view of cities, Gorringe recognizes that the urban space which offers land and infrastructure for people to build shelter is the same space where people are sometimes displaced and left landless. It is also where human communities can flourish and where they can vanish.

It is under Gorringe's treatment of place as city, in light of his concern with urban communities and the problem of social-spatial division, that his argument fully unfolds. In his view, cities have a certain "redemptive role," as they are the spaces where land use and building can serve the purpose of shaping the built environment in a way that real human communities, geographic communities for which place matters, are fostered. Redemption, in Gorringe's argument, is a process initiated by Christ's work and accomplished by the works of the Spirit and humanity.

To fully understand Gorringe's argument it is necessary to notice that for him redemption is a return to communal life, moving from individualism (where place does not matter) to community (which is built on the basis of geographical proximity). This can be seen when he talks about who we are, which needs to be contrasted to his understanding of sin. Gorringe states that, "I am who I am in encounter. I am created to give and receive help to and from my neighbor, and thus to be human is to be committed to community."[70] Sin, on the other hand, is understood primarily as an "alienation from the world" and from other people. Sin then is primarily a problem in the relationship between humans and the created environment and in the human-to-human relationship.[71] Cities, therefore, can have a redemptive role because they can be built to restore human communities and human relationship with the created, natural

[70] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 184.

[71] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 238–9.

environment. In this way, cities should be built or rebuilt to humanize us, that is, in a way that the natural environment is respected and that fosters a more communal way of living, overcoming individualism as an answer to displacement and overcoming the social-spatial divisions, bringing about redemption or humanization.

It is at this point of the argument where the Holy Spirit fits. To develop and achieve cities that play this redemptive role of humanizing us requires the "creativity of the Spirit of God," as he is the "author of all dreams and visions, the author of the imagination who seeks the new Jerusalem and anticipates it in structures here and now."[72] This anticipation involves building in a way that is sustainable and that no longer marginalizes the poor. Therefore, the city according to Gorringe's approach needs to be viewed with hope in spite of the walls of division humans have created. For Gorringe, hope does not make one to look to the future in a way that the present no longer matters. On the contrary, Gorringe is proposing that Christians look to the new Jerusalem to shape the present city.

Gorringe's reflection reveals two important points for this dissertation: First, because sin is understood primarily in terms of alienation from the world and from other people, the church's attitude of escaping the city for self-preservation is viewed not as fidelity toward the gospel, but as sinful alienation from God's good creation. Second, the school's theological response on the basis of Trinitarian theology offers an alternative view of humanity which is intended to affirm communal living and engagement in the city.

Consider how this school understands the Trinity and the relationship of that understanding to the formation of an alternative view of humanity. For Gorringe, "Who the Father, Son and Spirit are is predicated both on real difference (we cannot say 'ontological difference' of course)

[72] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment,* 161.

and on real unity… If human beings are made in the divine image, then it is this form of relationship to which we have to aspire."[73] Sheldrake holds a very similar position. For him, God is revealed in the Scripture as "a God who is, in the divine existence, perfect relationship. From this perspective, God is also the key to understanding the nature, demands, and possibilities of authentic human personhood, created 'in the image of God.'"[74] For this school, Trinitarian theology shapes how one sees humanity and affirms communal living and engagement in the city. Through this theology of place's emphasis on placedness or emplacement followed by engagement in the world toward the other, the church is viewed as reflecting the relationality and actions of God in the world.

Talk of God's action toward and in the world and of human action in light of what God does is important from a Lutheran perspective as well. For Lutherans, the existence of the church results from God's action of entering creation through the incarnation of God the Son, and through the Spirit's work of calling people to become new creatures through the power of the gospel. As new creatures, Christians then embrace creaturely life and serve the neighbor.

The questions to be asked at this point is this: How can Lutherans appropriate the major point shown in this section—that the theology of place rejects any Christian view that sees the church as a safe haven to escape the world and that this theology affirms presence and engagement in city life for the sake of others? How can Lutherans appropriate the insights offered by this school while maintaining its ecclesiological emphasis on the preaching of the gospel without neglecting the creation mandate? Can Lutherans offer an alternative view of humanity that affirms an engaged presence in the city or is the Trinitarian ethics of this school

[73] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 183.

[74] Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, 150.

the only way to do it?

To understand how a Lutheran appropriation can offer a contribution in this scholarly conversation it is important to note what is being left unsaid and undeveloped by this school. As will be shown in more detail in the next chapter, while speaking to an anthropological problem and seeking to offer an alternative view of humanity, this school does not offer a full-fledged theological anthropology. As a result, it does not talk much about the core problem of humanity—our broken relationship with the Creator—nor does the school talk much about creaturely life.

For these reasons, it is necessary that this dissertation enter in revised correlational dialogue with the theology of place to advance the theological reflection with the purpose of forming an urban missiology for the Brazilian church to account for the reality of *favelas.* In order to do this, I will articulate an integrated view of Luther's theology, a view which shows the relation between Luther's two kinds of righteousness and the Apostles' Creed and which accounts for Christian engagement in terms of first and second commissions, as proposed by Robert Kolb and Charles Arand.

Conclusion

The turn to spatiality in academia has provided an analytical tool or lens to many fields of study, including theology.

The theological development, initiated by Brueggemann, offers the church several tools for critical reflection and constructive action. In particular, the school of the everyday built environment offers a framework for the church to use in forming an urban missiology. In terms of critical reflection, the school challenges any Christian view that neglects engagement in the world. Thus, the school rejects the anthropology implicit in the idealized modern city—a view of

humanity that relativizes the problem of displacement by downplaying the relation between place and community and that fosters a social-spatial divide that is embodied in the built environment and hinders the church's engagement in the city. Alternatively, as part of its constructive contribution, this school proposes a new view of humanity for the city today, one that is grounded in Trinitarian theology.

This constructive vision, however, has yet to be articulated for Brazilian urban missiology, particularly in relation to *favelas*. As already indicated, Luther's framework of the two kinds of righteousness along with its creedal basis helps us with such an articulation. It attends to the theological concerns of the IELB and advances the IELB's theological reflection on the church's engagement in the city for preaching the gospel and serving the neighbor (through the two Great Commissions). We will now turn our attention to this task.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DIALOGUE WITH THE THEOLOGY OF PLACE AND THE MODEL OF CRUCIFORM ENGAGED PRESENCE IN THE CITY

Introduction

This chapter will put Lutheran theology in dialogue with the theology of the everyday built environment in order to offer a model for congregational engagement in the city. Scholars of this school have already recognized the potential contribution Lutheran theology can make to form a theology of place which engages the everyday built environment. Unfortunately, however, they have left Luther's theology underdeveloped. This chapter, therefore, will offer a fuller and more robust development of Lutheran theology and demonstrate how such a theology interacts with the scholarly conversation of the everyday built environment and offers a model of church engagement in mission and service in the city informed by the theology of place.

The Use of Luther in the Everyday Built Environment School

Scholars in the everyday built environment are concerned about two sorts of issues: the so-called privatization of faith and the ethical problems of dwelling. These problems are connected: when faith is understood as belonging to the privacy of the home, a dichotomy is created between private faith and public life in the world. The latter issue is not primarily a church problem, but a societal one. Still, the school argues that often Christian groups are indifferent toward displacement and get comfortable with urban divisions because they fail to live their faith in daily life as the result of such privatization. As a result, while the two problems are distinct, they both result in an ecclesial escape from urban life. In order then to solve this problem, the scholars of this school of theology of place argue for the relation between faith and daily life. When daily life and faith are brought together, the church comes to have a strong presence in the

world and works toward overcoming the ethical problems of dwelling, problems that dehumanize people in the city.

But where does Luther enter this picture? Luther is remembered by the scholars of the everyday built environment as a theologian from the past who can, in some way or another, contribute to the discussion in the attempt to affirm the relation between faith and everyday life in the world. Still, none of them is very clear on how exactly Lutheran theology can contribute, and each of them mentions different aspects of Luther's theology.

This makes it difficult to trace one line of thinking representing the school's use of Luther. For instance, Gorringe argues that Luther is helpful to overcome a dichotomist view that separates faith from daily life and mentions elements from Luther's theology of creation to affirm the everyday life in the world. He even lists Luther as one of the theologians from the past who could, "create the conditions for a theology of the everyday built environment."[1] Another positive reference to Luther is made by Jacobsen. He praises Luther for his two-dimensional understanding of sin and affirms that this understanding is necessary to understand the problem of urban divisions.[2][3] But his response to the issue is a Trinitarian understanding that should inform and shape the church as community. He seems to be unaware of the reformer's creedal theology and that this theology can speak to both dimensions, which will be shown shortly. Yet another scholar of this school, Sheldrake, is ambiguous in the role Lutheran theology could play in the discussion. On the one hand, he blames protestant theology, including Luther, for the downplaying of place and the rise of a more internally focused piety. In fact, for him, Luther actually initiated a tradition that was more concerned with one's personal relationship with Jesus

[1] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 13.

[2] Jacobsen, *The Space Between*, 88.

[3] Jacobsen, *The Space Between*, 88.

because of the Reformation's emphasis on one's relationship with God in terms of justification. On the other hand, he thinks that the Catholic focus on love toward the neighbor is not enough to answer the problems of the city and argues that this focus should be combined with the Protestant emphasis on the vertical relationship with God.[4]

This brief overview reveals that Luther's theology is considered in a fragmented way in the school of theology of place. Gorringe mentions Luther's creation theology, but overlooks the reformer's emphasis on justification. Jacobsen praises Luther for his two-dimensional understanding of sin, but he never mentions the fact that Luther has also a two-dimensional response to the broken relationship with God and with the neighbor. And Sheldrake situates Luther within the internally focused piety as if Luther did not have a horizontal-oriented theology as well. In other words, these scholars are unaware of how much a fuller understanding of Lutheran theology can contribute.

This fuller, integrated understanding of the reformer's theology will speak to how the church can counter the ethical problems of dwelling—displacement and urban divisions—and how faith can be lived in everyday life. The integrated approach to Luther's theology that will be offered in this dissertation shows the relations between Luther's two-dimensional anthropology—his framework of the two kinds of righteousness—and his creedal theology, revealing that Lutherans, while stressing the vertical dimension, have a strong theology of presence and engagement in the world. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will now offer a way of capturing this fuller, integrated understanding of Lutheran theology that facilitates the dialogue with the school of theology of place and, ultimately, that speaks to the urban missiology of the IELB.

[4] Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, 164.

Cruciform Engaged Presence: A Fuller Contribution from Luther's Theology

Luther's two kinds of righteousness along with its underlying creedal theology offers the church a way of engaging in scholarly conversation with theologians of the everyday built environment. To work toward this engagement, I will propose that Luther offers us a distinct way of talking about the church's life and action in the world: a cruciform engaged presence situated in the narrative of salvation. After defining this aspect of Lutheran theology, I will use it in dialog with the school of the everyday built environment to speak to the church's mission in the city.

Luther's Two-Dimensional Anthropology and the Cruciform Life

The term "cruciform engaged presence" is intended to express a kind of church presence in the world inflected by Luther's two kinds of righteousness along with its underlying creedal theology, and thus, this term needs to be distinguished from how other scholars have spoken of cruciform theology or cruciform life.[5] In this dissertation, "cruciform" regards the reformer's

[5] The term "cruciform" has been used to affirm the centrality of the cross (along with the resurrection) in discussions about theology of Scripture on the one hand, and in theologies of Christian discipleship informed by Paul's theology on the other. Peter H. Nafzger's proposal in *These Are Written: Toward a Cruciform Theology of Scripture* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2013), represents the first use. This is not how this dissertation uses the term "cruciform." The second use can be seen in works such as Michael Gorman's. Michael Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Paperback, 2001). Another example of this approach is found in Jimmy Davis. Jimmy Davis, *Cruciform: Living the Cross Shaped Life* (Hudson: Cruciform, 2011). Both books regard the Christian life in the world and speak to human relationships both to God and to creation (with emphasis on the neighbor). Thus, both Gorman's and Davis's use of "cruciform" are close to how this dissertation applies the term "cruciform." Still, Gorman does not distinguish faith and love in terms of vertical and horizontal relations, respectively, and sometimes it seems that one's sacrificial love serves as a means to establish or maintain one's relationship with God in his argument. Davis' use of "cruciform" comes even closer to this dissertation's use because he begins his argument by stressing that we are relational beings who have been created to relate to God and to other fellow humans and the rest of creation. The "cross-shaped life" which he talks about refers to these two relationships within which Christians are called to serve God and fellow creatures. These two relationships are foundational in Luther's two kinds of righteousness as well, but both authors fail to make an important distinction that is crucial in Luther's framework. This distinction regards Luther's understanding of one's relationship with God in terms of passive righteousness through faith and with neighbor and the rest of creation in terms of active love. While Luther holds this distinction as the basis of his theology, the uses of the term "cruciform" to mean a cross shaped life in the authors above situate active love both toward God and neighbor. Therefore, the term I am proposing needs to be distinguished from Gorman and Davis.

two-dimensional theology.

The Lutheran theologians of the sixteenth century held the distinction between the two kinds of righteousness as the heart of their theology. In the preface to his commentary on Galatians in 1535, Luther states:

> This is our theology, by which we teach a precise distinction between these two kinds of righteousness, the active and the passive, so that morality and faith, works and grace, secular society and religion may not be confused. Both are necessary, but both must be kept within their limits.[6]

By identifying this twofold distinction as "our theology," Luther made clear the fact that both dimensions or implied relationships—to God and to creation— and both God's work (toward us) and human works (toward the neighbor) are of extreme importance in Lutheran theology. Therefore, this framework preserves and emphasizes that which is the core of Lutheran ecclesiology—justification by grace through faith—and opens up the possibility of talking about the Christian life and the church's presence and action in the world in terms of active love toward the neighbor.

Luther's two kinds of righteousness has been picked up and emphasized in current scholarship mainly by Luther scholars and faculty members of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Robert Kolb and Charles Arand. They have demonstrated the trajectory of this two-dimensional theology in Luther's thinking[7] and the importance of this framework in the Lutheran confessions.[8] Kolb and Arand have also co-authored a book in which these two dimensions of

---

[6] Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* (Saint Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia and Fortress, 1958–1986) 26:7.

[7] According to Kolb, this distinction is rooted in Luther's sermons already in 1518 and 1519 and can be identified throughout the reformer's carrier mainly in his lectures on the Bible and in his sermons. The mature expression of this twofold distinction in Luther's theology can be seen in the reformer's 1535 Galatian commentary, where he calls this distinction "our theology." Robert Kolb, "Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness; Reflections on His Two-Dimensional Definition of Humanity at the Heart of His Theology," *Lutheran Quarterly* XIII (1999):449–66.

[8] In 2001, Arand also wrote an article on the two kinds of righteousness. Arand shows how Philip

human life are more fully developed as a theological anthropology.[9] This dissertation uses their articulation of this framework for the task at hand.

Luther's theological anthropology postulates that the human life is cruciform—in relationship with God and with other creatures. This point can be seen in Kolb's and Arand's words: "God created us as relational beings (in Luther's academic Latin, *in relatione*) who live in his presence (*Coram Deo*) and at the same time in community with one another (*coram mundo*). Who I am is determined in large part by how I live with God and my fellow human creature."[10] Notice that our relationship to fellow human creatures and community are considered as of high importance, like in the theology of place.[11] But notice also that, for Luther, a fundamental part of being a "relational" creature regards also our relationship with God. Therefore, humans are relational beings in a vertical way as well as in a horizontal way, just as a cruciform shape has a horizontal and a vertical axis. But there is much more in Luther's understanding of who we are.

Within each of the two dimensions represented by the two axes, human life takes shape according to different ways of interaction. Let us first look at how human life takes shape in the human-to-God interaction or vertical relationship. In this relationship, humans live in relationship with God in a passive way. This means that God loves His creatures and provides for their creaturely needs out of His fatherly love. In this vertical relationship, God in the person of the Son also restores human relationship to himself. The Holy Spirit then calls people to faith,

---

Melanchthon used this two-dimensional theology as a conceptual framework in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Charles Arand, "Two Kinds of Righteousness as a Framework for Law and Gospel in the Apology," *Lutheran Quarterly* XV (2001): 417–39.

[9] Charles Arand and Robert Kolb, *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008).

[10] Arand and Kolb, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 27.

[11] For Gorringe, "to be human is to be committed to community." Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 184.

through which believers passively receive the benefits of Christ's work—believers are passively affected by Jesus death and resurrection, dying and being raised with Christ, rising as new creatures, forgiven and united with Christ—and live then a life of daily repentance and forgiveness. Therefore, to say that we live on the basis of a passive righteousness means that we are passive receivers of God's gifts, both the creaturely gifts and the gift of salvation. Life in this dimension is marked by God's declaration that humans are righteous in his sight through Christ, which implies union with Christ, and this declaration constitutes the core of human identity. The true human identity, therefore, is (re)established by God's coming to us as Redeemer, which makes the vertical relation and the passive righteousness of the cruciform life indispensable to talk about who we are.

There are at least two basic premises that serve as the background for this emphasis on the passive righteousness. The first is Luther's view that God created his human creatures as essentially religious creatures, in the sense that we have been created to trust God and worship him. This emphasis regards the vertical relation, represented by the vertical axis of the cruciform life. The implication of Luther's view here is that to have faith or to trust something or someone is part of what it means to be a human creature. The second premise is that the fall into sin broke our relationship with God. The combination of these two premises results in the understanding that, because of the reality of sin, humans no longer trust God, but try to fill the void left by the broken relationship with him by worshipping gods they create. In addition, because we have fallen apart from this relationship with the true God, we are dead in our sins and cannot come to the true God by our own strength and will. Then, instead of trust in the true God, humans end up fearing his wrath. The human attempt to solve this problem, one's attempt to save herself or himself, leads to a certain self-sufficiency rather than trust in God alone and to self-interest even

when doing good to others. For Luther, what can change this is the new identity passively received from God as he declares us right through his word.

One could ask, however, "how does this understanding of who we are in terms of passive receivers overcome this problem and lead to Christian action toward the neighbor (and ultimately help fight urban injustice)?" This would be a fair question. In fact, this kind of concern was raised by those who opposed the reformers in the sixteenth century. Kolb and Arand recall that the reformers' emphasis on "faith alone" as the means to receive salvation was viewed as a "danger" that consisted of "a rejection of good works," which they [opponents like Johann Eck and Johann Cochlaeus] believe could undermine the social order and lead to anarchy."[12] Unfortunately, the opponents of the reformers neglected the biblical distinction between the two kinds of righteousness and how the Christian lives within each of the two dimensions. While in the vertical dimension one is a passive receiver, in the horizontal dimension, on the other hand, the Christian is an active giver, in the sense that we are guided by the Word to share what we have received with others.

This two-dimensional theology is usually represented by a vertical axis and a horizontal one, and this representation then makes the shape of a cross, a "cruciform" shape. Therefore, one could say that Luther's framework understands the Christian life as a "cruciform life." God is the one who rescues human beings from their false gods and self-sufficiency. To know and believe in this then create the necessary conditions for a different way of viewing one's own and the neighbor's reality. One sees herself or himself no longer as under God's wrath but as a child under the Father's love and mercy. In addition, one also sees the neighbor not as a means to an end but as a fellow human creature who is the end of one's love. Therefore, under this new way of perceiving reality,

[12] Arand and Kolb, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 30.

Christians become active givers and sharers of what they have received from God. All this means that, from a Lutheran standpoint, safeguarding the distinction between the two ways of interacting with God and the neighbor in the vertical and the horizontal realms, respectively, helps one in leading the church's action against the modern city's ethical problems of dwelling.

To provide that leadership, however, it is necessary to understand Luther's cruciform theology in light of the Creed. Through the Creed, one confesses that God is present in creation and so is the Christian. Thus, Luther's two-dimensional theology, when joined to the Creed, provides a more robust theology of Christian presence in the world and, from that place, we can begin to dialog with the school of theology of place, whose theological strategy is Trinitarian theology. To this creedal framework underlying Luther's theology, we now turn attention.

Luther's Credal Framework and His Affirmation of Presence in the World

As already indicated, the major theological problem that the school of the everyday built environment addresses is the privatization of faith, which the school relates to a more internal-focused spirituality that leads to a neglect of life in the world. Curiously, the theology of place addresses this problem not by talking about God's presence and action in the external, concrete world, but by reflecting about the inner life of the Trinity and applying conclusions about this life to human beings.

The Creed, on the other hand, involves a narrative of God's relational love toward his creatures. This love is reflected in God's revealed works in the world and has as its highest points the coming of the Son into the world to encounter us where we are. From this narrative of saving presence flows Christian presence and engagement in the world toward the neighbor. This affirmation of God's and the church's presence in the world can be see in Luther's understanding of the Apostles' Creed.

Luther's explanation of the Apostle's Creed in the Small Catechism refers to God's works of creation, redemption, and sanctification, under which he organized the works of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, respectively. Under each article, the reformer describes God as the One who does good things for and to his creatures, while the creatures passively receive God's gifts. Thus, a creedal approach strongly affirms the relationship of passive righteousness, as humans receive from God in this world and the next. As Luther makes that confession, however, he also affirms the presence of the Christian in the world under God's design and rule. This affirmation of life in creation is the creedal character I would like to emphasize as we converse with scholars from the theology of place. It helps to counter redemptive escapist narratives, which scholars of the theology of place identify as problems for the church's engagement in urban mission.

In reading through Luther's explanations of the articles of the Creed, one can note ways in which Luther envisions God's people as present in the world. To begin with, Luther asserts that the Creed helps God's people live in the way of life ordered by the Ten Commandments. In the First Article, Luther strongly affirms bodily life and offers a list of concrete gifts necessary for this life along with our horizontal interpersonal relationships of the home: "He has given me clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children."[13] These are all good things to be enjoyed and for which, "I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him."[14] This service and obedience points to the relation between the First Article and the Ten Commandments. In the Larger Catechism, Luther talks about the commandments as "everyday domestic duty of one neighbor to another."[15] Notice that the context where the commandments

[13] Small Catechism, The Creed, in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 354.

[14] SC, The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 354.

[15] The Large Catechism, The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 433–35.

are to be followed is the very network of relationships of the home which is listed in the Frist Article. In addition, when explaining further this article in the Larger Catechism, Luther affirms that the recognition of God's creaturely blessings out of his love for us should lead us to serve him "with these things" as we are told to do in the commandments.[16] In this way, we use the creaturely gifts we have been given in in his service. To put all this in other words, the reformer affirms the goodness of God's creation in the First Article and begins to show where the motivation and means to "obey" the Commandments come from—namely, his own gifts.

The Second Article also has to do with presence in the world and service. In this article, the reformer describes Christ's work as delivering us from our captivity "under the power of the devil." In doing this, Christ brings us "under his dominion," as he becomes "Lord" over all things. Notice that Luther understands Christ's work not in terms of a rescue mission to take us from the world. Rather, he becomes Lord over all things. This same understanding of redemption is further explained in the Larger Catechism. After stating that we first had received "all kinds of good things" from the Father at creation, "the devil came and led humans into sin, death and all misfortune." But Christ "came down from heaven to help us," and, "Those tyrants and jailers have now been routed, and their place has been taken by Christ, the Lord of life . . . [who] assumed dominion at the right hand of the Father."[17] Note that Christ's mission, again, is not to take us from the world but to take creation back from Satan's dominion. That is why we now "serve Christ in eternal righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally."[18] Therefore, being redeemed by Christ means in no way an escape from the world. Rather, it means that now we live under the lordship of Christ, who has

[16] LC, The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 433, 35.

[17] LC, The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 433, 35.

[18] SC, The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 355.

dominion over the entire creation.

In the Third Article, Luther argues that individuals are "called by the Gospel," and this implies a calling into a community of believers, given that the Spirit also, "calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church."[19] Notice therefore that the Christian is present not only in the world as an individual (First Article) who believes in Christ and lives under his ruling (Second Article), but also within a gathered community that lives by the Word (proclaimed and visible). In the Large Catechism Luther stresses that this community is ordered in such a way that, "everyone may fully obtain daily forgiveness of sins…"[20] The receiving of forgiveness daily stresses the passive nature of our vertical relationship of the cruciform life. But toward the end of his explanation, the horizontal dimension is brought to the fore, as the reformer reveals how to properly understand the commandments after believing the articles of the Creed. First Luther highlights that the commandments fail to make one a Christian, while the Creed does. Then, second, the reformer explains how, once one has knowledge of and believes the articles of faith of the Creed, one comes to "love and delight in all the commandments of God…"[21] This means that this community of faith which lives on the basis of daily forgiveness around the Word now also lives in the world with God's "gifts and power, to help us keep the Commandments."[22] Therefore, to put all this in other words, the community which is called and gathered by the Spirit through and around the Word, now looks also to the reality beyond itself, to the reality of the neighbor, in light of the commandments.

All this shows that this integrated approach to Luther's theology offers a framework for

[19] SC, The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 355.

[20] LC, The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 438.

[21] LC, The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 440.

[22] LC, The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 440.

human life that is cruciform (related to God passively and related to others and the world actively) and creedal. It stresses our relationship with God and the passive nature of our relationship with him. In addition, it also gives attention to the reality of one's neighbor. The cruciform presence of the church in the world is understood within the narrative of salvation, opening human life to both creation and mission engagement. To these two kinds of engagement we now turn the attention.

The Two Commissions and the Narrative of Salvation: Engagement toward the Neighbor

It is important to explore how the Church can engage its surrounding reality because Christians have not always understood their role as God's children present in the world. Kolb and Arand have called attention to the fact that throughout history there have been those who thought that there is little or no relation between sanctified life and the world. The authors lament this fact: "Some Christians throughout history have concluded that the world is too corrupt a place in which to live, much less in which to work out their sanctification."[23] In other words, many have lived their sanctification in escape or disengagement from creaturely daily life.

In addition to this problem identified by Kolb and Arand, the theology of place raises a larger problem to be addressed: the privatization of faith. As described in the third chapter, the privatization of faith hides creation from all three articles, as it leads believers to live the Christian life in terms of personal relationship with Jesus in their private life, disengaged from the world.[24] Notice that this attitude, although it aims at preserving one's relationship with Jesus, ends up denying the very points confessed by the Creed. In answer to this problem, all three

[23] Arand and Kolb, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 107.

[24] These Christians, "mistrust the city for its worldlines and its cultural power or they fail to see its relevance beyond their mandate for evangelism." Jacobsen, *Sidewalks in the Kingdom*, 50, 55.

articles affirm presence in creation and, when placed within the narrative of salvation, such presence becomes purposeful in relation to two commissions.

Engagement through the First Great Commission

The first Great Commission regards God's words in the creation narrative, when he created humans in his image and said that we would have dominion over the creation (Gen. 1:26). In Kolb's and Arand's words: "As Christians re-enter creation, they find that they are now in a position to properly carry out the first Great Commission, to exercise dominion over the earth by serving it and preserving it (Gen. 1:26)"[25]

It is important to note that in Luther the first Great Commission is not limited to the care for the natural environment. Luther talks about the "physical blessing"[26] that accompanies the dominion over the creation, and applies it too many activities we do and to things we develop out of God-created things, from cultivating the soil to the building of cities;[27] it includes the ability "to rule the home, the family, the cities, kingdoms."[28] Notice that ruling a house requires that one care for the neediest one in this house, like a baby who needs the diapers changed. This means that Luther extends this dominion over creation to speak not only of the care for the natural environment and animals but also of the care we provide to fellow human creatures in need. Also, because the physical blessing regards the activity of building and organizing community life, [29] to reflect about this commission in light of the theology offered above opens a door to

[25] Arand and Kolb, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 113.

[26] *LW* 1:204.

[27] *LW* 1:204.

[28] *LW* 1:204.

[29] See how the reformer understands Cain's achievements after leaving his father's house. Luther recalls that Cain, although he was sent apart from his family and became a wanderer as a consequence of his sin, was able to build a city and have a family and community life because God had not removed the physical blessing from him. *LW*

consider cultural development from a Lutheran standpoint, which will be considered in detail later.

In addition to speaking about the active righteousness being exercised in response to the first Great Commission, Arand and Kolb also speak of that which is the distinctive task of the church as part of the Christian's active love toward the neighbor as they articulate the Christian life in response to the second Great Commission.

Engagement through the Second Great Commission

The second Great Commission, also called the Gospel Commission, goes back to the task Jesus gave his church through the apostles at the end of the gospel narratives to make disciples from every nation by baptizing and teaching (Mat 28:18–19). This commission regards the very core problem of humanity and aims at reestablishing our core identity. This response to the problem of our humanity in terms of Gospel Commission follows very logically from Luther's two-dimensional theology. Having been called by the gospel and made church by the Spirit's work, the church is led to creation to share what it has received. Arand puts it very clearly: "The church *coram deo* lives from the Word of God, and *coram mundo* it lives to deliver the Word of God to others."[30] Therefore, this is fundamental for considering the church's presence and action in the world.

What underlies this logic is the articulation offered above under the third article. Christians are called by the gospel into a community of faith, live around the Word, and this community looks at the reality of the neighbor to share this same word.

1:204, 311.

[30] Charles Arand, "A Two-Dimensional Understanding of the Church for the Twenty-First Century Arand, Two-dimensional ecclesiology," *Concordia Journal* 33 no. 2 (April/2007): 146–65.

All this shows that this integrated view of Luther's theology results in a cruciform engaged presence of the church in the world. As a result, this theology helps overcome the problem of the privatization of faith. Now, what needs yet to be demonstrated is how the cruciform engaged presence can speak more clearly to the urban issues that configure the challenges of Brazilian metropolises. In order to do it, it is necessary to enter into dialogue with the school of the everyday built environment.

Dialoguing with the School of the Everyday Built Environment

In order to dialogue with the school in light of the theology offered above, it is important to begin with how the school uses the doctrine of the Trinity to shape the church's ethics toward the urban problems the school identifies.

In the theology of the everyday built environment, the doctrine of the Trinity functions in two ways: first, favoring an Eastern articulation of this doctrine, the school sees the intra-trinitarian relations between the persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which implies difference and complementarity, as a model for human communities; because humans have been made in God's image. This understanding of God should shape the church as community and, ideally and ultimately, should serve as a model for communities in society. Second, the doctrine of the Trinity offers a vision of the works of God that shapes the work of the church. When focused on the actions of God, the school uses this doctrine to shape both its approach to presence in place—place as land, building, and city—and the actions of the church. When seen through the lens of Lutheran theology, this use of Trinitarian doctrine is problematic because this use of the Creed loses sight of the central biblical narrative and of what the Creed is confessing. In addition, by moving from the intra-trinitarian relations to ethics, the proposals work by analogy to the Godhead rather than by a theology that accounts for creaturely life as understood within God's

design.

The Limits of the Trinitarian Response of the Theology of Place and Luther's Fuller Account of Creaturely life

As shown in the third chapter, the school of the everyday built environment speaks to an anthropological problem but does not offer a fully-fledged theological anthropology. The response the school offers is an alternative view of humanity based on an understanding of the Trinity.

There are at least two points to be considered in assessing this use of Trinitarian theology. First, one needs to consider that the ethics that emerges from this Trinitarian theology is based on an assumption that is not shown to be clear in the Bible. This assumption is that the church and Christian ethics need to be shaped by the intra-trinitarian relations between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; because humans have been created in the image of the God who is "communal" by his very nature, the church (primarily) and then society (ideally) need to reflect this characteristic of God.

One of the problems with this theology is that the intra-trinitarian relationships as a model for ethics does not logically follow from the biblical affirmation that humans have been created in God's image, and the school does not demonstrate how in Scripture these Trinitarian relations represent an aspect of God's image that we should aspire to ourselves or that God wants us to reflect in our lives. In addition, even this intra-trinitarian relation is not demonstrated to be clear in Scripture. Gorringe and Sheldrake, for instance, move from God's self-revelation in Scripture in terms of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to an affirmation of diversity in the midst of "perfect relationality," and the authors apply it to human beings.[31] It goes beyond the scope of this

[31] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 183. Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, 150.

dissertation to assess Trinitarian ethics here, a task which has already been done from a Lutheran perspective.[32] Nor is it the present goal to assess how fitting the argument is for the school to gain a hearing as a public theology, which is one of the major purposes of the school. The importance of this point is to reveal that, by moving from the Trinitarian relations within the Godhead to ethics, important anthropological questions, things regarding human life in the world and the structures of common daily life are not discussed. One could even argue that Gorringe's use of Trinitarian ethics undermines his theology of place because the distinction between Creator and creature is blurred. The reason for this is that one characteristic of being placed creatures is to have limits and responsibilities related to the network of relationships or social structures in particular places. Gorringe, however, does not discuss these aspects of daily life and thereby does not give voice to the Scriptural distinction between the Creator and his creatures. As a result, one is left wondering how the school in fact addresses the problem of the privatization of faith, given that the blurring of this distinction results in a neglect of important aspects of daily life in the world.

In contrast, the Lutheran approach to anthropology articulated above in terms of cruciform living along with its creedal basis presupposes a clear distinction between Creator and creature and offers a clearer theological definition of creaturely life. As shown above, one presupposition of the understanding of human life as cruciform is the biblical teaching that human beings have lost their true identity at the Fall, as the human-to-God relationship was broken, and so humans are dead in sin, unable to solve this problem. Notice that the supposed ability to mirror God's life

[32] For Lutheran scholar Joel Biermann, "It is a near-universal assumption that intra-trinitarian relationships, or the Trinity itself is (or should be) normative for human relationships, organizations, and society. But the *imago Dei* or 'image of God' hardly serves as conclusive proof that God intends the divine reality and being somehow to be normative for humanity." Joel D. Biermann, *A Case for Character: Towards a Lutheran Virtue Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014). 137.

as a response to the problem of humanity is not achievable in Luther's theology. For the reformer, it is by God's coming to us as our Redeemer that this problem is solved. This emphasis of the second article of the Creed (explored above) reflects the logic of the first article and is repeated in the third as well: just as God has created us and preserves our life out of his fatherly love and saved this life out of pure grace, he also re-creates our (vertical) life through the power of the gospel. Therefore, our core identity, as already explained, involves being saved and declared righteous by God. Notice therefore that in our relationship with God there is this clear understanding of who does what for whom, through which a distinction between what God does and what we can(not) do is clearly stated.

What this shows is that, from a Lutheran standpoint, the account of humanity offered by the theology of place in terms of reflecting the relationality of the Trinity falls short in accounting for the core human identity. A fuller understanding of Lutheran theology, however, provides a cruciform shape to such a life.

In addition to accounting for God's work for and towards us confessed by the Creed, the understanding of life as cruciform accounts more fully for creaturely life. From Luther's theology of creation, one learns that God has established fundamental structures for human life and activity. These structures comprehend what today could be divided into four estates or situations: the family, the economic activity, political and social organization, and religious life. Each of these estates presupposes particular places or spaces of human interaction and the exercise of responsibilities like the home, the workplace, public spaces, and religious spaces. In these four spaces Christians look at and engage the reality of the neighbor to serve with the horizontal relations of the cruciform life. These are what Kolb names "vocational structures,"

which, "God built into the essence of humanity in creation."[33]

All this shows that Luther's theology captured here in terms of cruciform engaged presence not only presupposes a clear distinction between Creator and creature, but also offers a much richer account of creaturely life. These structures are also important for congregations to consider when they engage their surrounding reality in service to both the first and the second commissions. This will receive attention later. Thus, a Lutheran model of cruciform engaged presence speaks to the network of relationships people have by virtue of sharing common places with others, which the theology of place's Trinitarian ethics does not.

The scholars in the theology of place use the doctrine of the Trinity for more than intra-trinitarian relations, however. They also use it as a way of talking about how to perceive our relationship to place. As explained in the third chapter, Gorringe uses the works of Father, Son, and Spirit to encourage three ways of talking about place: place as land, as building (under a treatment of human dwelling), and as city. Each of these distinctions can be understood also as a way of articulating presence in the world. His three-fold approach to place is holistic in that it moves from one distinction to the other showing how the three are interconnected and why they need to be treated together. In dialog with this aspect of the scholars of the theology of place, I would like to show how Luther's cruciform engaged presence provides a richer way of understanding that nature of human engagement in each of these places.

Place as Land and the Cruciform Engaged Presence of the Church

Gorringe makes three major points about the theology of the everyday built environment in relation to the first, second, and third articles, through which he affirms specific ways of relating

[33] Robert Kolb, "Called to Milk Cows and Govern Kingdoms: Martin Luther's Teaching on the Christians Vocations," *Concordia Journal* 39 no. 2 (Spring 2013): 133–41.

to place according to each distinction he makes. Under the first article, Gorringe treats place as land, and argues that we are placed beings in terms of "rootedness in the soil" because we are *Adamah*. It is important to highlight what this recognition of our placedness or emplacement means. Informed by the phenomenologist approach to place at this point, Gorringe is saying that by virtue of our embodied nature, we have limits related to our local situatedness in the world, and that we are always already within a network of relationships by virtue of sharing common places with others. This implies that the relatedness of place matters for who we are, for how we know what we know—it has an epistemological implication—, and for how we care for the natural environment. Therefore, a positive aspect which Gorringe brings to this revised correlational conversation under land is an understanding of emplacement that comprehends knowing through the lens of place (the epistemic aspect of place), being in relationship with others (the relatedness of place), and acting toward place (the care for the natural environment). This is what one could call a "rooted presence" in the land.

Gorringe does not give much attention to the relation between knowledge and place (although he quotes authors whose words presuppose this epistemic aspect of place) nor to the relatedness of place (since he does not have a strong theology of creaturely life). Yet, given the importance of these aspects in the phenomenological approach that informs Gorringe and given the purpose of this dissertation, I will later explore them further. For now, therefore, it is important to explore in more detail Gorringe's contribution regarding his emphasis on the relation between our rootedness in the soil and our care for the environment.

Gorringe affirms that, since we are all *Adamah*, we have a responsibility to care for the natural environment. For him, this responsibility is a corollary of the fact that we are placed beings. Gorringe is not merely reaffirming the importance of the environment and its care in

general, which the ecological approach to place does in a much more compelling way, he is also connecting our responsibility toward the environment with the activity of building. In this way, he paves the way to discuss another distinction he makes, that is, place as building. This point is one of Gorringe's greatest contributions to this conversation given the purpose of this dissertation. Impoverished urban dwellers of most mega cities in the world live in extreme areas where there is an intermingling between natural and built environment that usually damages the former. In other words, Gorringe's treatment of place as land is a helpful way of describing how we relate to the land by virtue of how God created us. From this follows that we need to care for the natural environment.

Now, to advance the dialogue, it is important to show how the Lutheran theology offered above helps appropriate Gorringe's articulation of place as land and how it can contribute to the dialogue.

Gorringe's affirmation of a rooted presence can be welcomed through Luther's theology of creation expressed in his explanation of the Frist Article, a presence that embraces the embodied nature of our existence and all the creaturely gifts necessary for this life.

But notice that in Luther's understanding of presence in the Creed, there is a (vertical) loving relationship out of which these gifts are given to us, and a (horizontal) loving relationship between us and creation, resulting in the sharing of the creaturely gifts with others. This was shown when I explored the connection between the receiving of these gifts with service through the commandments in the Creed.

This means that through the cruciform engaged presence, Lutherans can contribute to the conversation by proposing a "gifted presence" when it comes to engagement toward the the natural environment. Through its cruciform engaged presence understood within the narrative of

salvation, Lutheran theology roots our care for creation in more than our being created beings. Luther posits a loving relationship with our Creator that continues to inform our lives in the world. Yes, we are created beings, formed from the soil, but we are also loved by our Creator. Our Creator lovingly provides for our needs and then calls us to activity in this world with the gifts that he provides. Lutheran theology affirms that we, as creatures, relate to God passively and relate to creation and the land actively. Therefore, all the gifts we have been given are now used to serve and obey God in light of the Second Table of the commandments. This means that we now use our reason, strength, arms, hands, and material gifts to the service of creation.

This shows that Lutheran theology not only appropriates the helpful insights Gorringe offers under his rooted presence, but it also offers a better understanding of presence for the purpose of engagement or action. The cruciform engaged presence offers a richer account of human engagement to care for creation, an engagement that results from the Lutheran "gifted presence" in the land.

Place as Building and the Cruciform Engaged Presence of the Church

Gorringe's second major distinction—place as building—is made according to his understanding of the second article. Gorringe connects environmental issues with the way one carries out the activity of building. For Gorringe, this activity answers the common human need for shelter, but often we disrespect the natural environment in our building, in the sense that climatic conditions, and topographic and hydrographic characteristics are ignored or destroyed, all this to the expense of the less-economically favored or even to other, non-human creatures. In addition, the activity of building since WW II has fostered a certain homogeneity and rejected the vernacular ways of constructing, resulting in a "cultural imperialism" and in the "marginalization" of the poor, both of which are listed by Gorringe as urban injustices. Notice

that Gorringe now appropriates the criticism of the constructivist approach to place, as his concerns are oriented toward the "ethical problems" in respect to the "problems of dwelling"[34]—displacement and urban divisions, both of which cause marginalization. The church then needs to work toward justice in terms affirmation of diversity and a more communal way of living.

It is under this concern for justice that Gorringe makes a connection with the second article more explicitly. These issues which demand justice need to be seen "in the light of the incarnation,"[35] and responded according to "our understanding of reconciliation."[36] For Gorringe, these Christological themes serve as a response to these injustices because Christ has destroyed the walls of division between people groups. Therefore, for Gorringe, a solution that emerges from Christology is to work toward "genuine, concrete community," which architecture should foster or embody.[37] Notice, therefore, that the second article and the Incarnation in particular are treated primarily as a response to the horizontal-dimension problems listed above.

It is important to note here that the kind of presence Gorringe affirms is one in which, first, humans answer their bodily need for shelter and, second, they work toward the benefit of the poor. This means that this kind of presence is not unaware of nor indifferent to the problems of injustice. Rather, it recognizes that we sometimes build our places in a way that causes the displacement of the other and social-spatial divisions. It is a presence that involves the perception of ethical problems and an effort to fight them.

How can Lutherans appropriate some of these points and contribute to the discussion? To understand the kind of presence Gorringe is affirming is important to answer this question. He

---

[34] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 109.

[35] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 251.

[36] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 250.

[37] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 109.

moves from being placed to building place, and this move allows him to talk about the ethical problems of dwelling. In doing this, Gorringe helpfully offers a vision of the relation between people and place that is perceptive and critical of injustices related to this sort of ethical issue. Such perception and criticism are informed by the constructivist school and articulated theologically. In fact, Gorringe associates these ethical problems with his understanding of sin. He understands 'sin' "in a structural way, as being spiritual precisely in economic, social and political dimensions."[38] Towards the end of his book Gorringe makes it clear that a concrete manifestation of sin would be the culture of consumerism, competition, and what he calls "savage capitalism,"[39] all of which alienate us from the world and from other people. Therefore, notice that Gorringe's perception and criticism comes from a political-economic orientation or position. Before speaking to this point, however, it is important to consider sin in a structural way from a Lutheran standpoint.

Understanding structural sin from a Lutheran perspective helps us see how to appropriate Gorringe's perceptive and critical presence. Lutheran scholars Alberto L. Garcia and John A. Nunes have already dealt with this question in their book, *Wittenberg Meets the World: Reimagining the Reformation at the Margins*.[40] The authors lead their readers to the commandments of the Second Table, stressing specially the Seventh Commandment. They demonstrate that, in Luther's theology, the pervasiveness of sin leads us to recognize that not only individual persons bear the reality of sin in their lives as corrupted human creatures but also institutions in society do. Of course, this does not mean that institutions or the market, for

[38] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 21.

[39] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 238.

[40] Alberto L. García and John A. Nunes, *Wittenberg Meets the World: Reimagining Reformation at the Margins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 33, 45.

instance, are ontologically sinful.[41] But just as the human nature has been corrupted, everything that we are engaged in bears the marks of sin. These marks do not only mean that the institutions or systems we operate will eventually fail to be perfect because we are imperfect; they also sometimes embody evil practices when these practices oppose what God has designed. In fact, Luther lists what is today called political corruption, extortion, unfair bargain, both "in the market and in common trade" as examples of how pervasive the transgression against the Seventh Commandment is. The reformer also stresses under the Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth Commandments that these practices affect primarily the poor, calling Christians to be not indifferent about it but to give responses envisioning not a perfect world, but a better one for the neighbor who is poor and defenseless. Notice that the criticism of the school saying that injustices have been committed against the poor in the city and that this results from normalized institutional practices in societies can be appropriated because the Lutheran understanding of sin presupposed in Luther's anthropology accounts seriously for the problems of the horizontal dimension.

Notice, however, that while, on the one hand, Gorringe helpfully reminds us that sin pervades all structures in society and that it is manifested in consumerism, on the other hand, he limits the concept of sin to the horizontal relationships, resulting in a critique that is one-dimensional. As a result, the Christological themes he uses, as already indicated, have only a horizontal function.[42]

---

[41] The first article of the Formula of Concord addresses the understanding that confused the essence of human beings with original sin itself. The document rejects this view by affirming that original sin is something "*in* mankind's nature, body, and soul… it is a corruption," and not the nature or essence itself. The Formula of Concord, in Kolb and Wengert, 511–19.

[42] In fact, the Incarnation has played an important role in theologies of place since at least Lilburne's *A Sense of Place*, in 1988. Since then, nearly all theologies of place use the Christological theme as a means to affirm the goodness of creation on the one hand, and an incarnational-kind-of attitude in which the church comes to mirror

This is one consequence of Gorringe's theology based on the assumption that God wants us to reflect his inner life in terms of 'perfect relationality' within the Godhead. Due to the fact that he, and the other representatives of the theology of the built environment after him, is concerned with how humans can reflect God's relationality and action primarily, he ends up stressing only horizontal-related problems and offers a solution that is limited to this same dimension. He overlooks, then, the problem which is central in the Scriptures and in the church's Creed, namely, the broken relationship with the Creator.

Luther's cruciform theology, on the other hand, speaks to this dimension overlooked by the school. As a result, Lutheran theology can not only appropriate Gorringe's perceptive and critical observations, but can go further and offer a much deeper criticism and a much-needed response.

The contribution Lutherans can offer toward the critical work of the school regards, first, Luther's two-dimensional understanding of sin, which leads to a Lutheran response that also accounts for the two dimensions, for the fact that human life is cruciform. Let us first look at Luther's vertical understanding of sin. In Luther's Small Catechism, the First Commandment is foundational to understand all the others. What it means for the particular purpose of this dissertation is that the manifestation of sin in terms of the culture of consumerism and competition needs to be seen primarily in light of the broken relationship with the Creator, as a problem of idolatry. In fact, even Gorringe himself, while leaving it out of his major argument, affirms that the "Mammon"[43] has replaced the transcendent. He recognizes the problem of idolatry in today's consumeristic societies but does not show how it happens. Neither does he

Christ's attitude toward others. Therefore, the use of this doctrine in theologies of place regards our horizontal relationships—the active righteousness—only. Gorringe is an example of this tendency. See Lilburne, *A Sense of Place*.

[43] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 34.

answer the problem with an affirmation of the importance of restoring one's relationship with the one true God. But Luther's cruciform theology does it.

Kolb and Arand recall that Luther talks about "mammon," which is an expression of material wealth, "as the most common idol on earth."[44] The pursuit of ongoing economic progress facilitated and embodied by the modern city can be analyzed through what Kolb and Arand call "contemporary 'Mammonites.'"[45] Mammonites try to acquire more and more material goods to fulfill not only physical needs but also "spiritual satisfaction," as they place their identities and trust either in the material stuff they acquire or in the image of themselves they try to build based on what they have. The relation of this idolatrous way of life and the horizontal relationships is that, "In a culture of consumerism, we buy things not only to pamper our inner self but also to lift ourselves above those who cannot afford them."[46] Taking into consideration the critical work of the theology of place, one could say that we also build things to foster this culture and to lift ourselves above others. The kinds of problems the theology of place identifies in the modern city are, in fact, the consequence of a much deeper problem, namely, the broken relationship with the Creator and idolatry. And finally, this all shows that to fully answer the problems the school identifies it is necessary to account for how God answers the problem of our idolatry, how he comes to us and gives us a new identity through the Word. This new identity does not "lift ourselves above" others but ultimately leads us to serve others without self-interest.

Therefore, notice how, while Gorringe is helpful in pointing out the ethical, structural problems of dwelling, his critique is still limited to the horizontal dimension. In addition, the theological affirmation of Christian engagement to fight such injustices loses this much needed

---

[44] Arand and Kolb, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 86.

[45] Arand and Kolb, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 87.

[46] Arand and Kolb, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 87.

response to the deeper problem of humanity. In this way, the second article in Gorringe's theology loses its major soteriological function in the church's Creed and becomes just a matter of social justice.

Through the cruciform engaged presence of the church, on the other hand, the problems of injustice can be attended in a way that does not neglect the major problem of humanity—the true-identity-loss problem. Rather, by emphasizing the vertical dimension of sin and Christ's unique redemptive work to answer this problem and preserving the distinction between what only God can do and what we are guided to do by God, Lutheran theology can foster an engagement which responds to both dimensions. It restores the right relationship of the creature to the Creator and, among other things, renews the creature to fight urban injustices through the first Great Commission.

As shown above, Luther extends the dominion over the creation to include the care for the neighbor. Therefore, in thinking of how the church can attend the first Great Commission, in light of Gorringe's perceptive and critical presence in the city, one can think of the neediest ones in society and of how to answer the problem of urban injustice in light of the Second Table of the Commandments.

The Second Table of the commandments as part of the horizontal aspect of the cruciform presence can also serve the purpose of identifying other horizontal problems that need the church's attention but are unperceived by Gorringe's approach. The scholar's exclusive attention to structural sin (in the market mainly) hinders his perception in the sense that he never considers sin and injustice being committed within impoverished urban communities by the people who live there, personal sins committed by individuals against fellow human creatures. This individual dimension of sin, therefore, is something that the cruciform engaged presence brings

to the table and is an important aspect for the church to consider when engaging the urban reality in mission and service.

Once again, therefore, revised correlational dialog helps Lutherans learn from Gorringe even as they supplement his work in necessary ways. Gorringe's treatment of place as building makes Lutheran theology aware and attentive to ethical problems of dwelling to be addressed in the city. Lutheran cruciform engaged presence deepens the analysis of the problem and demonstrates how the creedal narrative offers a deeper and richer solution when it comes to engagement.

The same strength and limits can be identified in Gorringe's third distinction—place as city—as he helpfully affirms a way of being present in the city to bring hope to urban dwellers through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. His perspective of hope, however, misses an important part confessed by the church through the Creed, which hinders the church's engagement to fully account for the challenges of the modern city.

Place as City and the Cruciform Engaged Presence of the Church

Gorringe's treatment of place as city is where he attends to the role of the Holy Spirit in a theology of place. To put the argument concisely, cities should be built or rebuilt to humanize us that is in a way that the natural environment is respected and that fosters a more communal way of living, overcoming individualism and the social-spatial divisions, bringing about redemption or humanization. This point is of great importance to understand Gorringe's argument and to perceive a void in his proposal in terms of engagement. For Gorringe the church is seen as an urban "eschatological community," and the Holy Spirit plays the role of "inspiring" the church to carry out this difficult task of building humanizing cities, bringing a perspective of hope to this task. Gorringe here speaks of a kind of presence that is intended to bring hope.

This emphasis on hope is very important to understand Gorringe's proposals because it helps one see how Gorringe is situating his work on a spectrum between the problems of Christian escapism and the problems of cultural transformationism. For Gorringe, some Christians have used a perspective of hope shaped by Augustine's understanding of the city, which results in escaping the city. Augustine's view of the city, due to the evil present in it, led to the understanding that we are all "resident aliens,"[47] journeying toward the future. For Gorringe, this view, "relativizes the significance of what we do here."[48] Hope, under this perspective, leads to escapism, as engagement with others in society is difficult or never possible.[49]

Others (Gorringe does not name any groups or theologians at this point in particular) use the perspective of hope to create pretentious expectations of bringing heaven to earth. In his words, "There is no question of expecting a new Jerusalem on earth, for the new Jerusalem will be God's creation, absolutely free, unforeseeable, and transcendent…"[50] This shows that Gorringe is not proposing a teleological ethics or a kind of transformation of society that establishes God's kingdom on earth. The perspective of hope, of expecting the "unforeseeable" and "transcendent," therefore, avoids this triumphalist or conquest narrative.

Gorringe's perspective of hope, therefore, articulates a kind of presence that is neither escapist nor triumphalist. In this way, Gorringe helpfully reminds his readers that the church does not need to ignore the surrounding urban cultures, nor does it need to transform them into

---

[47] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 141.

[48] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 9–10.

[49] In this reading, Gorringe argues, although people share a common "physical city," have similar occupations, and live under the same laws, the Christians and other urban dwellers are separated by their very different "goal and orientation." Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 141.

[50] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 145.

something “Christian.” In other words, it avoids the private Christians’ attitude on the one hand, and a Christian “cultural imperialism” on the other, and stresses the importance of cultural diversity. Gorringe’s perspective of hope, therefore, is sensitive to cultures and thus is a helpful contribution to think of the church’s presence in the city.

How can Lutheran theology appropriate Gorringe’s understanding of presence as far as how the church’s relation to the cultures is concerned? First, Lutheran theology can affirm Gorringe’s rejection of cultural escapism because the affirmation of presence in creation in the three articles of the Creed does not allow the church to escape creation. Rather, it leads us to live and work within it. Second, through the cruciform engaged presence, Lutheran theology can situate cultural characteristics, activities, and diversity under the first Great Commission, in light of the First Article as God’s good gifts. This means that Gorringe’s affirmation of cultural diversity can be welcomed by Lutheran theology through the cruciform engaged presence.

On the other hand, because of the second Great Commission and the need for the church to recognize sin as it engages in God’s mission, Lutheran theology will add a deeper development to Gorringe’s understanding of the church’s presence in the city. Sin is not only a problem on the vertical relationship, but it is reflected on or even embodied in horizontal relationships and cultures. For this reason, Christians need to assess cultural developments to know when to question and reject them.

This assessment needs to take at least two major aspects into consideration. First, when assessing culture, the church needs to observe whether certain activities enhance or diminish the vocational structures of human life (explained above). If any activity affects these structures negatively, the church will need to challenge the local culture through the church’s teaching and

practices.[51] The preservation of these basic structures configures one criterion to assess the local culture.

Second, in addition to paying attention to how God has structured human life, Christians are guided by the Ten Commandments in their engagement in culture. In Luther's Small Catechism, Christians are instructed not only to avoid doing evil but also to act for the benefit of the neighbor. As discussed above, within the Second Table, Luther teaches the church to "prevent or resist evil" which the neighbor might suffer in his body or in his property.[52] This may involve denouncing and opposing those normalized practices that embody the so-called structural sins and the personal sin of individuals, which also hurt the neighbor. In other words, the benefit and well-being of the neighbor is another criterion to assess whether a given cultural development can be affirmed or needs to be questioned.

These criteria will be used in all three forms of engagement (in land, building, and city). The importance of explaining them here is to show that the cruciform engaged presence allows Lutherans to appropriate Gorringe's helpful affirmation of presence that avoids both escapism and triumphalism and that it goes beyond Gorringe when it comes to cultural engagement. Lutherans both welcome cultural diversity as part of God's good gifts and offer criteria to assess culture so that the church can engage in it informed by Scripture and theology.

While Gorringe helpfully distinguishes his proposal from both escapism and triumphalism, his perspective of hope lacks an important element. Although speaking about hope and the work of the Spirit, Gorringe makes no clear reference to the Word or biblical narrative. Therefore, when it comes to the church's engagement in the city to bring hope to urban people, Gorringe

[51] Arand and Kolb, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 116.

[52] See Luther's explanation of the Fifth, Seventh, Ninth and Tenth Commandments. LC, The Ten Commandments, in Kolb and Wengert, 410–27.

lacks a narrative of hope. This is problematic because the need for a narrative of hope has been part of the development of a theology of place since its inception by Brueggemann. In 1977, at the outset of the scholarly trajectory of a theology of place, Brueggemann called for what he termed the "presence of stories for humanness"[53] for rethinking the urban and addressing concerns of urban displacement. For Brueggemann, such stories would bring rootedness and hope. Interestingly, Brueggemann himself does not offer such a narrative. He defines place as "space that has historical meaning," which provides "identity"[54] to people, as opposed to the "history-less space" (where the poor was relocated to during urbanization in the 1960s and 1970s). The problem, however, is that this criterion did not prevent the ethical problems in Brazil. The Brazilian government and the elites have always told a "historical story" in the building or rebuilding of Rio, rooting "the place in history." Such stories, however, led to "boundaries of exclusion" and displacement, resulting in rootlessness and hopelessness. What exactly then constitutes such a narrative of humanness (that could bring hope), which Brueggemann calls for but has not been effectively cultivated in Brazil.

A Lutheran urban missiology informed by a theology of place offers such a story. The story that underlies the understanding of life as cruciform, engaged, and present in the world is a story that begins with creation and ends in a new creation. The God who created everything by the power of his word and called everything "good" is the same God who entered this creation to restore our relationship with himself. Now, the Word (spoken and visible) recreates us and gives us a new identity as God's children and as sisters and brothers of one another, regardless of any divisions that have been socially or culturally constructed. The Word gives life and guides the

[53] Brueggemann, *The Land,* chap. 12.

[54] Brueggemann, *The Land,* chap. 1.

life of God's children toward the neighbor and toward a world that will be recreated and a community that will be established under Christ embracing various languages and peoples. The narrative of hope and rootedness is, therefore, a cruciform message.

Through the cruciform engaged presence, Lutheran theology situates this task of sharing the narrative of hope in the church's response to the second Great Commission, as the church comes to share with the world the same word through which it lives before God.

Therefore, notice that the cruciform engaged presence supplements Gorringe's presence of hope by providing a narrative of humanness that is biblical, the narrative that makes us truly human again, as it restores our two relationships. To share this narrative with others is the distinctive task the church has, while to fight injustice and to respond to creaturely needs of fellow urban dwellers is a common purpose which the church has with others in the city.

How then can congregations engage the urban reality in light of this scholarly conversation? How can this dialogue between the theology of place through Gorringe's proposals and Lutheran theology through the cruciform engaged presence ultimately foster a Lutheran presence and strategies that account for the reality of *favelas?* In what follows, I will offer a model for congregational engagement in the city that flows from this conversation.

A Model for Ecclesial, Congregational Presence and Mission in the City

The purpose of the dialogue with the school of the everyday built environment was to reveal two important aspects: first, Gorringe offers helpful categories to talk about place, to affirm presence in the world, and to understand the city. In addition, he brings Trinitarian theology to the discussion in a way that theology shapes approach, and this is a noble endeavor. However, second, Gorringe has not really thought through how Lutheran theology can contribute to this endeavor, and his proposals fall short of offering a clear theology of creaturely life, and of

accounting for how the church can engage the urban reality to offer a response that answers the deeper problem of humanity. This dissertation is intended to foster a congregational engagement in the city, and for this purpose a model for ecclesial engagement in mission in the city is now drawn from the dialogue above.

Congregational Cruciform Engaged Presence: A "Gifted Presence" in the Land

As congregations engage their surrounding realities in the city, they need to consider Gorringe's helpful "rooted presence," which implies an embrace of our emplacement. Therefore, congregations need to embrace a different way of knowing—that is, through the lens of place—the relatedness of place, and the responsibility to care for the natural environment. The first two aspects are underdeveloped in Gorringe. His emphasis is placed on the care for the natural environment. This section, therefore, further articulates the first major points and highlights the Lutheran contribution in terms of "gifted presence" regarding engagement.

The first step congregations need to take to apply the model of the cruciform engaged presence is to get to know well the places where they are through a different way of knowing, knowing through the lens of place. One way of doing this would be through what Jacobsen calls "tacit knowledge"—a rooted way of getting to know one's place. Following a phenomenologist approach to place in regard to the acquisition of knowledge, Jacobsen distinguishes this form of knowledge from "cognitive knowledge." While the latter can be acquired by reading a book or by receiving an explanation about a given theory (sometimes at a very abstract level), the former requires the very practice of something in order to know about or how to do it. In Jacobsen's words, tacit knowledge regards, "The kind of information that we can comprehend and know

with our bodies," and has to do with "common aspect of everyday life."[55] This does not mean that cognitive knowledge is no longer relevant to acquiring knowledge about one's missional context. Richard Osmer proposes that the first, "empirical descriptive task" of practical theology consists of both an informal as well as a formal way of gathering information about a situation or context. The formal way consists of academic analysis and empirical information and is of great importance.[56] Therefore, the cognitive knowledge of one's missional context still matters, and urban missionaries thus still need to do or read formal research on their contexts. But what Jacobsen helps us do is to recover a way of knowing that is very helpful for urban missions, although tacit knowledge receives little attention in urban missiology. Since this way of knowing is being applied to place, I will call this a "rooted knowledge of place."

Through rooted knowledge, one gets to know the city by walking and seeing reality and other people from a closer distance. This is different from getting to know the urban reality through the window of the car as one drives through the city or even through a pre-conceived map or a GPS. In fact, because people frequently rely on digital media to provide external sources of knowledge, a rooted knowledge of place is even more important. Due to the reason that we are "rooted in the soil," one way of getting to know the place and the people where we are is by stepping on the ground and having face to face encounter with others. This summarizes how Jacobsen envisions tacit knowledge in the city.

To put this into practice, it may be necessary that pastors and church leaders take a walk in the neighborhood where they intend to develop the mission work. Perhaps they can take the route which most of the people in that place take in their daily commute to perceive the urban reality

[55] Jacobsen, *The Space Between*, 38.

[56] Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 82, 83.

as they do. Or maybe they can just walk with a dweller of the neighborhood whom they already know and ask the person about that place. The missionary needs to pay attention to how the local people speak of their place—do they use street names and numbers to indicate where some people live, or do they say the name of the people and point to the place? All these aspects will indicate how people denote space and how they perceive their own place of living. Do they consider their place a nice place or a problematic one? Do they call it a neighborhood or village, center or periphery, *favela* or community? These are all questions that urban missionaries may need to answer to get to know the place where they intend to serve. Perhaps all these questions come down to one: what observations can you make about the place where your congregation intends to do mission work through walking the place and talking to people you encounter? How do they provide you a geography of their place? To answer this first question can be a good starting point to getting to know the place.

Once congregations know the places where they are, the congregation can embrace what is being called the relatedness of place. This embrace means to see the people, places and the institutions (into) which congregation are (or enter) in relationship by virtue of sharing a common place as those they engage to serve and preach the gospel. This is close to what Brueggemann calls the "unexpected unacceptable vocation" that God gives his people by placing them among other people in the world.[57] This vocation which may involve service to and gospel preaching to the neighbors living or working around the church property. These are people with whom congregations share a common place and probably have common purposes. The embrace of our emplacement means that one values and works toward strengthening the networks of relationship with these people and institutions. Therefore, in order to facilitate this embrace of

[57] Brueggemann, *The Land*, chap. 1.

relationships, the following question can be answered: Who are the people and what institutions live and stand close to us here where we are called and placed as church?

And finally, once a congregation knows the place and its people, it needs to care for the natural environment around. This is especially important because, as already highlighted, Gorringe connects this concern for the environment with the activity of building, and this connection speaks to one of the very problems that configure contextual challenges of mega cities. As shown, these problems are often either unperceived or neglected in theological discussions because of the neglect of creation and the spatial dimension of life in theology. But this dissertation appropriates the theology of place's attention to and care for creation and space.

In light of this appropriation through the cruciform engaged presence, Lutheran congregations can give attention to and care for the environment in response to the first Great Commission. The Lutheran engagement through this commission, involves an engagement that results not merely from how we have been created but also from the fact that there is a loving relationship with God through which he provides everything we need out of his fatherly love and, thus, we are guided by his word to share what we have received.

How this engagement can take place will depend on where one is. There may be the case that non-profit organizations already give the proper attention to how better to care for the natural environment. In this case, congregations may help such organizations through volunteer work or even financial contributions. Possibilities like this will be explored as I apply this model to the reality of *favelas.* For now, suffice it to say that Gorringe's helpful attention to the natural environment in terms of rooted presence can be appropriated by Lutherans, but Lutheran theology can speak of a gifted presence, which better leads to engagement through these actions.

Congregational Cruciform Engaged Presence: A Neighbor-oriented Critical Presence in the Urban Built Environment

The revised correlational dialogue above showed that Gorringe offers an important contribution to form an urban missiology as he reveals the importance of being perceptive and critical of ethical problems of dwelling. He makes Lutheran theology aware of the problem of displacement and of social-spatial division that results in the marginalization of the poor, all of which reflect on the built environment. The model of cruciform engaged presence appropriates this perception and criticism because this theology takes seriously the consequences of our separation from the Creator, consequences reflected in the horizontal relations. Therefore, an important step toward applying this model in one's urban missional context is to pay careful attention to the built environment to identify these kinds of problems even as one considers the built environment as holding structures that are helpful for faithful enactment of mission. One example of how helpful the built environment can be will be explored later, as I return to the analysis of the physical reality of *favelas* and discuss the implications of the fact that *favelas* foster a more ambiguous distinction between private and public. This will receive further attention in our last chapter again.

Let us then recall what is important in order to develop a perceptive and critical presence regarding the issue of displacement. As shown in the third chapter, at the beginning of the so-called "spatial turn," discussions in academia were questioning the practice of urban displacement. Later, when the turn to spatiality enters theological discussions through Brueggemann's *The Land*, the scholar offers the insight that the idea of urban progress, embraced by the majority of society, led to the government's claim to a supposed "right to

relocate and reassign people"[58] to peripheric areas of cities. In the theology of the built environment, following the critical perspective of Gorringe, Sheldrake helps understand further what Brueggemann criticized: "The meta-narrative of the people who hold power takes over the public places they control. However altruistic or benign the agenda of those with power appear to be, the history of these places sadly often becomes a story of dominance and repression."[59] Notice that Sheldrake recognizes that urban interventions of this kind might have good intentions or purposes, such as the necessary urban mobility that is probably fundamental for the functioning of any big city today. But he also recalls that usually, these interventions favor only part of the urban population and damage the poor. The importance of returning to this theory as I offer the present model of engagement is that congregations need to be perceptive of the problem. Given that placement and the relatedness of place matter for who we are and how we interact with one another, Christians need to be both perceptive and critical of these developments. In order to never let secular metanarratives shape their assessment of reality, congregations, which want to engage the city in mission and service, therefore, need to be perceptive and critical of these ethical situations.

Let us now look at the problem of urban divisions. These divisions can be of any kind—ethnic, social-economic, or racial divisions. For Gorringe, these urban divisions diminish fellow human creatures and alienate us from each other. In addition, these divisions hinder the actions of the church. As viewed in the previous chapter, churches sometimes are indifferent to this problem because divisions would allow them to safeguard their ecclesial identities (by avoiding mixture with other people groups). Therefore, because these divisions affect congregational

[58] Brueggemann, *The Land,* chap.12.

[59] Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, 13.

engagement negatively, congregations need to identify them and be intentional about crossing the boundaries created by society.

Notice that Gorringe's perceptive and critical presence make urban missionaries and congregations aware of these problems that might hinder their engagement in the city, although they may sometimes not notice it because metanarratives normalize the ethical problems. Therefore, Gorringe's contribution is important to perceive the problem, but his analysis falls short of accounting for the deeper problem of humanity, and thus his answer in terms of engagement is limited as well. The problem he identifies is only horizontal, and so is his solution. Therefore, now, it is important to see how the cruciform engaged presence can help Lutheran congregations and missionaries.

Lutheran theology supplements Gorringe's perceptive and critical presence. The cruciform engaged presence widens one's perception of sin to engage the city in mission. My pastoral and mission experience has shown that those who are the victims of structural sin and live in the margins of society are not prevented from committing injustice against others. In fact, both Lutheran theology and this experience lead to the recognition that sin against the neighbor and against God's good structures of daily life is committed by individuals on a daily basis. Thus, congregations need to look at the urban reality to identify both the problems of dwelling and of personal sins, for both hurt the neighbor. The Second Table of the commandments is helpful to do this, as shown above.

But how can Lutheran congregations answer both personal and structural sin they identify in specific contexts in the city? To put the answer concisely, it is necessary to address human separation from the Creator. One conclusion of the scholarly dialogue above was that, ultimately, the ethical problems of dwelling result from the problem of idolatry. Having lost their true,

vertical identity, humans try to lift themselves up above others as they create their own gods. In the city, this self-uplifting can be seen in the problems Gorringe identifies. For this reason, this model suggests that the answer to these urban problems should not be limited to a horizontal response that merely focuses on people's way of relating to place and to one another. Rather, the cruciform engaged presence stresses that the starting point to address the problem is God's solution—God encountering fallen human creatures with the Word. Then, called out of their idolatry and egocentric ways of living, human creatures are made God's children, who recognize all blessings they have received—salvation and creaturely blessings— from the Father, This emphasis will receive further attention in the next section under a discussion of Christian hope and the cruciform message. Before that, however, a few more points need to be highlighted about the church's presence in building.

Earlier, it was argued that Lutheran theology can assess urban developments. It is time to exemplify the kind of assessment missionaries may need to take in their own contexts. Let us begin with the problem of displacement. As just recalled, there was urban unrest in the 1960s throughout the world because of urban displacement. Impoverished families would be relocated or left completely homeless in the city. The question then to be asked in the face of this reality and in light of Lutheran theology is this: what does the experience of displacement do to a family? What does this ethical problem of dwelling do to this basic (high valuable) vocational structure of the First Article? The next chapter will apply this Lutheran lens to analyze the issue in Brazilian metropolises. To look at the problem in this way shows that this dissertation is not merely applying Gorringe's political penchant to develop an urban mission theology that speaks to poverty. Rather, this point reveals that through this revised correlational conversation, Gorringe's questions and solutions in part can challenge Lutherans to think deeply and

concretely about their theology. In doing this, Lutherans can find out how in such urban developments, the construction of place has undermined God's structures for human life. Urban congregations and missionaries need to do the same kind of analysis in the face of urban developments.

Let us now look at the problem of urban divisions. For Gorringe, the urban divisions that segregate people groups diminish fellow human creatures and alienate us from each other. In addition, they hinder church engagement in the city because God's children end up separated (by this division) from their neighbors who may need the church's help and message. Therefore, for the sake of the neighbor, congregations need to perceive how sometimes societal divisions might hinder the church's work in God's kingdom. Moreover, they need to try to overcome whatever separates them from the neighbor in need.

How then exactly can congregations answer these challenges? To answer this question, it is important to go back to the ecclesiology that represents the cruciform understanding of human life. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the framework of the two kinds of righteousness preserves and emphasizes that which is the core of Lutheran ecclesiology—justification by grace through faith. Through this theology individuals receive a new identity and are incorporated into the community of believers called church through the Word of God. This view led Lutherans to develop an ecclesiology in which the church is not bound to one place. This means that the church has no physical boundaries, no geographic center, and neither does it have a geographic margin. Rather, in Lutheran theology, the center of the church is the Word of God (incarnate, spoken, and visible in terms of Baptism and the Lord's Supper). In this way, Lutherans can affirm the ecclesiality of any group of Christians gathered by the Spirit around the gospel in any place, regardless of any divisions in society. Wherever the church is located and

wherever the neighbor is situated, God calls the church to share the gospel with and serve the neighbor, even amongst the poorest ones in the peripheries of major cities, and there the Spirit may call them into the community of faith. This point will receive attention again in the last section. Now it is important to note that Lutheran ecclesiology has no geographic boundaries, and the mission practice that better reflects this understanding of the church is one which does not let the boundaries which society creates to separate the church from the neighbor in need. In addition, this practice never neglects the fundamental task the church has, namely, the preaching of the message through which people are called, gathered, and given a new identity.

The answer to the question above also depends on the theology presented under the treatment on the Creed. Lutherans understand that from God's loving actions toward us flows our loving actions toward the neighbor. Like in the relation between the Creed and the Ten Commandments shown above, what God does for us (confessed in the Creed) leads us to "serve and obey" him (according to the Ten Commandments). It is out of this responsive love that the Christian then lives and tries to serve the neighbor to answer his or her needs. Theologically then, as already said, this fits under our response to the first Great Commission.

And finally, to fully answer the question about how these urban injustices can be addressed, it is necessary to think of the church's engagement through the first Great Commission. This engagement will depend on the local practices or ways of life that the urban communities have developed and through which they answer their own creaturely needs. Or, there may be the case that non-profit organizations already help people in need and fight injustice in a much better way than congregations can do. Such ways of life and institutions can be seen as part of how God as sustainer of creation preserves his world. In order to get to know such institutions, congregations may need to map or make a list of these organizations with

which they share a common space and purposes. Thus, congregations can build relationships mediated by trust, in order to learn from and serve with them. In other words, there may be different ways of attending the first Great Commission guided by the Commandments, and a perceptive and critical approach to dwelling offers a missiological lens for the congregation to discover and participate in these things. In addition to these ways of answering the urban challenges, the church needs to bring hope to urban dwellers. Therefore, we now turn attention to the third part of this model, which brings the narrative of hope to the fore.

Congregational Cruciform Engaged Presence: Sharing the Cruciform Message that Brings Hope to the City

One of the major points that resulted from the scholarly conversation with Gorringe was that congregations need to have a "sensitive presence" as they enter urban cultures for the purpose of bringing a narrative of humanness that brings hope to urban dwellers. Therefore, urban mission efforts need to attend three major aspects: first, congregations and urban missionaries need to have a clear message, the cruciform message so that they can both speak to the deeper problem of humanity and give the proper attention to specific, local horizontal issues. Second, they need to develop the proper strategies to enter other urban cultures with this message, which requires that local cultural characteristics are respected. And third, they need to learn how to use the church building in the new place in a way that helps respond to the two Great Commissions, which implies that the church space is used to attend local needs and is viewed as representing the church's engagement in the new place, which also involves cultural sensitivity. These three major points presuppose the Lutheran theology of culture offered above and the basic features of Lutheran ecclesiology explained in the previous section, namely, that the church has no boundaries nor geographic margins, but is centered in the Word of God.

Let us then begin with the clear message that urban congregations and missionaries need to

have as they intend to enter new urban contexts. As shown above, one of the limits of Gorringe's approach is the lack of a narrative of hope. Trying to avoid the escapist 'private Christians' attitude' which is suspicious about urban life and values engagement only for the purpose of evangelism, Gorringe falls into another problematic approach—one that lacks the preaching of the gospel. The cruciform engaged presence of the church, on the other hand, brings with it a cruciform message—that is both gospel-focused and oriented toward creation and the neighbor. It is through the vertical emphasis of this message that people living in the margins of society can be called by the gospel and become part of a community that is no longer oriented toward geographic centers, but toward God's Word. In contrast, it is through the horizontal aspect of this message that the new believers that are born into the church can realize that they can put their faith into practice right there where they already live, toward their own community.

In this way, the cruciform message brings both hope and rootedness to urban dwellers. This message brings hope because it leads to the expectation "for the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God." (Heb. 11:10) And while the church expects this day, living on the basis of daily repentance and forgiveness of sins, it can work toward a better world for the neighbor. People living in the margins of any city can work toward a better city for their kids and neighbors next door. This message brings hope both of eternal life, because of its central narrative, and of a better city, as it affirms the engagement of the church toward the neighbor with God's help. In addition, it brings rootedness, as this message does not lead to escape but engagement in one's place, be it in a nice central area of a modernized city or in its peripheric areas.

The horizontal aspect of the cruciform message is also helpful for addressing the personal sins committed against one's family or neighbor's next door. As mentioned above, sin is

committed also at the personal level in the city, and the church needs to address these problems through its teaching and practices. Here, the horizontal dimension of the cruciform message can be attended through Luther's explanation of the Second Table of the commandments. The last chapter will demonstrate how this can be done within the particular context of *favelas*, showing that this message attends specific contextual challenges. For now, suffice it to say that the cruciform message fosters this attention to the very places of everyday life, which, again, implies rootedness and hope of a better home and place to live with the neighbor.

Notice, therefore, that through the cruciform engaged presence, with its cruciform message, this model avoids the private Christians' attitude without falling into Gorringe's reductionism. The cruciform message, therefore, fills a void perceived in Gorringe's approach and helpfully addresses that which is the deeper problem of humanity—the separation from the Creator, which affects our relationships with fellow human creatures.

Once urban congregations and missionaries are clear about the cruciform message they have to share, they need to think of mission strategies that account for local urban cultures in order to enter different contexts in the city to share this message. Therefore, it is important to consider how local urban cultures can shape mission strategy.

Urban missionaries and congregations need to think about how the characteristic of local cultures can shape strategies so that specific places and their dynamics are accounted for. This means that congregations need to get to know their surrounding local cultures by observing the urban built environment, identifying what kinds of cultures they embody or foster. They need to have a sensitive presence. This sensitive presence addresses both problems with the cultural setting as discerned through the eyes of theology and ways the cultural setting can be affirmed and used as an instrument to the service of the gospel. In addition, to get to know people and

their cultures, people need to step on the ground to walk and meet people on the ground. In other words, the same practice of walking and seeing reality from a closer distance now aims at developing strategies to reach out to people with the message that God has restored our relationship with himself. This approach may lead congregations to the conclusion that the strategies used in other parts of the city may not be as useful in the neighborhood where the congregation or mission stations stand.

Therefore, an important step to apply this model is to ask questions like this: what particular strategies have we as a congregation used in other contexts? Do these strategies now need to be changed or replaced so that the local culture we are entering is respected and engaged for the purpose of the gospel? In order to answer these questions, again, the ecclesiology that is boundary-and-margins free and the Lutheran theology of culture need strongly to inform congregations and missionaries. Since the church is centered in the Word and values local cultural characteristics, both through Lutheran theology in terms of cruciform engaged presence, congregations and missionaries do not need to concern about bringing a church culture and the strategies shaped in other contexts to apply them to the new context. Rather, they can develop ways of reaching to people that are sensitive to their own local cultures, with the ultimate goal of sharing the narrative of hope and rootedness.

And finally, urban missionaries need to think of how the church building interacts with the surrounding environment and its community, and how the space can be used to attend to both the vertical and the horizontal, creaturely needs of people.

In order to show the relevance of the church space it is necessary to demonstrate that cultural sensitivity also involves the architectural shape of the building. As mentioned above, Gorringe speaks little to the concrete cultural engagement of the church; he just says that the

church needs to empower the community and work toward cultural diversity, but he does not explain how it can be done. For this reason, it is important at this point to look at how another scholar of the built environment advances the reflection on the urban environment, namely, Eric Jacobsen. While Gorringe is more concerned with the interaction between the natural and the built environments, Jacobsen focuses more on the network of relationships between different kinds of built environments and community. In *The Space Between,* he speaks to the relation between urban communities and the church building. In doing this, he also gives attention to how different types of architectural church buildings impact perceptions of Christian presence in the city.

Jacobsen identifies two different architectural church types, indicating how they can foster presence in or disconnect from the surrounding community where congregations are located. The so called "embedded churches," he suggests, "facilitate direct connections between the interior space of the church building and the public space of the wider society outside. These churches usually come right up to the sidewalk."[60] Their architectural shape usually is strongly marked by a high tower and Christian symbols which evoke the "sacred." Embedded churches, built before WW II, stand in stark contrast to what Jacobsen calls "insular churches." This latter type, built after WW II, usually has a large parking lot between the street and the door of the temple, which indicates a focus on car-dependent communities.[61] Their shape is very functional, and their architecture is more similar to any other "secular" building. Interestingly, it is the members of embedded churches, whose architecture in Jacobsen's opinion is much more welcoming to urban communities that have adopted what he calls a "fortress mentality." This is a mentality of self-

[60] Jacobsen, *The Space Between*, 190.

[61] Jacobsen, *The Space Between*, 190.

protection rather than openness to the community. What Jacobsen demonstrates is that the church building, its shape, and the distance between the main door and the sidewalk all matter for ecclesial presence and mission in the city.

The present model therefore proposes that urban missionaries or congregations working to plant churches in the city take these questions into account. Would an embedded or an insular church better represent the culture where a new congregation is being planted? Which would better represent an engaged presence in the community? These are all questions that need attention. In addition, considering the context of urban marginality and poverty to which this dissertation speaks the most, how can the church property be used to help answer people's creaturely need of having a better city and place to live as well? This is important because how the building functions or the purposes established for its use can also indicate engagement in or disengagement from the surrounding community. Moreover, it is also important because the centrality placed on the Word in Lutheran theology situates the church wherever the Word is preached (and the sacraments are administered). This means that the church building needs to facilitate this distinctive task and not create a cultural boundary that stands between Christ and fallen human creatures, which might happen if the architectural shape of church spaces of other parts of the city are just replicated in more impoverished areas of the city. To attend the points proposed by this model in terms of church building helps avoid this problem and actually fosters a kind of presence and engagement in the city that is instrumental to the gospel.

By paying attention to these physical aspects that represent the church's engaged presence in (or disengagement from) urban communities, this model brings together the holistic approach of the school to the everyday built environment, the Lutheran two ways of accounting for engagement (First and Second Great Commissions), and a way of rethinking the church

building(s) that is different from that which configured the creation of a "less complicated space" in the city, which is a mark of the IELB's presence in Brazilian metropolises. To account for all these elements helps the church share the cruciform message and its narrative of rootedness and hope, in service and obedience to the God who has encountered us where we are and given us a new identity.

Conclusion

Luther's anthropology in terms of the two kinds of righteousness presupposes the Trinitarian works of God as articulated in the church's Creed in terms of Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification.

The combination of the reformer's two-dimensional anthropology with this creedal understanding of God's actions in the world can be captured as "a cruciform engaged presence." This way of capturing Luther's theology opens avenues for dialoguing with the school of the everyday built environment, a dialogue primarily with Tim Gorringe, who initiated the school's conversation and set the basis for those who followed his path.

This dialogue shows that while Gorringe offers helpful language to talk about place and presence in the world in light of Trinitarian theology, the author (along with other representatives of this school) loses track of the Creed's basic story of salvation. As a result, the theology of place's response to the urban issues it identifies regards only the horizontal relationships, leaving a void regarding humans' relationship with the Creator.

This dissertation fills that void by articulating a fuller Lutheran theology based on Luther's two-dimensional theology, its creedal basis, and the two ways of engagement in response to the two Great Commissions. Such a model for urban missiology does two things: first, it identifies a deeper problem, namely the problem of the broken relationship with the Creator, to which it

offers a much-needed response—an emphasis on the vertical relationship and on the Word of God; and, second, it integrates that missional work of the church with its responsibility to also engage in the care of creation, attending to the particularities of place. Thus, a Lutheran model of urban missiology attends to the first and second great commissions even as it recognizes how such a life is shaped by attending to a theology of place.

Ultimately, this dissertation offers an ecclesial model of congregational engagement in mission in the city. This model consists of three major points, and under each point different outcomes of the conversation with Gorringe are highlighted. The following points summarize the model and offer a list of questions to be answered under each part of the model to help those who wish to use this model:

Congregational Cruciform Engaged Presence: A "Gifted Presence" in the Land

Congregations need to have 'rooted presence' in the city, which implies an embrace of what it means to be emplaced creatures and leads to care for the natural environment. In addition, congregations need to have a 'gifted presence,' in the city, that is, a kind of presence that recognizes the many gifts we have been given from the Creator, gifts which we share with others.

Questions:

1. What observations can you make about the place where your congregation intends to do mission work through walking the place and talking to people you encounter?
2. What kinds of problems related to the natural environment are there for your congregation to consider in the area where it stands?
3. What kinds of actions can your congregation take as it tries to address these ecological problems?

Congregational Cruciform Engaged Presence: A Neighbor-oriented Critical Presence in the Urban Built Environment

Congregations need to have a 'perceptive and critical presence' in the city. This kind of

presence is perceptive of the neighbor's needs and critical of whatever hurts the neighbor or undermine God's given structures of human life. This presence then also aims at answering the creaturely needs of fellow urban dwellers.

Questions:

1. Could you list examples of the ethical nature (both positive and negative) of dwelling reflected in the built environment where your congregation develops mission work?
2. What are injustices or sins against the Second Table that may require your congregation's attention?
3. What can your congregation do in response to these problems (structural and personal sins) in a way that respects people's own ways of answering their own needs?

Congregational Cruciform Engaged Presence: Sharing the Cruciform Message that Brings Hope to the City

Congregations need to have a "sensitive presence" that is intended to bring a narrative of humanness that brings hope to urban dwellers. This sensitivity toward cultures requires the Lutheran theology of culture so that cultural characteristics may be used to the service of carrying out of the church's distinctive task of preaching the gospel.

Questions:

1. What are the cultural elements which can serve the purpose of the gospel in the context where your congregation intends to develop mission work in the city (focus on mission strategies)?
2. Which kind of architectural church building type is sensitive and welcoming to the community where you develop mission work?
3. How can the church building be used in a way that attends the needs of the community?

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MODEL OF CRUCIFORM ENGAGED PRESENCE APPLIED TO THE REALITY OF *FAVELAS*

Introduction

Chapter one started with the question, "How can Lutherans have an engaged presence in Brazilian cities, accounting for the reality of *favelas* in both Lutheran ecclesiology and missiology?" Now it is time to answer this question. This final chapter applies the model of congregational cruciform engaged presence in the land, in building, and in the city to the *favela*, and thereby demonstrates how this dissertation contributes to the missional ecclesiology of the IELB.

Congregational Cruciform Engaged Presence in *Favelas*: A "Gifted Presence" in the Land

One of the highlights of the revised correlational dialog offered in the previous chapter was the integration of Gorringe's understanding of "rooted presence" and the Lutheran understanding of "gifted presence." Rooted presence implies a "rooted way of knowing" one's place along with an embrace of the relatedness of place—the network of relationships one has by virtue of being locally situated in the world— and affirms the care of the natural environment as we carry out the activity of building. Gifted presence comes from the cruciform engaged presence through which the church sees itself as the object of God's relational love and creation as the object of the church's relational love. The Lutheran contribution of gifted presence provides clearer visions of why and how the church can and should engage creation. Consider how these ways of being present relate to the reality of *favelas*.

A Rooted Way of Knowing *Favelas*

As explained in the previous chapter, Gorringe's affirmation of our rootedness in the soil

along the lines of the phenomenologist school opens a door to a different way of knowing, a rooted knowledge of place. Consider the significance of this point. Since the 1950s, urban interventions changed the built environment in Brazilian metropolises and created ample spaces for people to move across the city on wheels—as it was adapted to the automobile. As a result, many city dwellers have driven through the city in their daily commute with the help of maps and, more recently, the use of GPS. Consequently, people come to know the city without necessarily stepping on the ground and seeing the urban reality from a close distance. As a result, the most common way of knowing the city has been to some extent abstract, impersonal, and individualized. One comes to move through the urban spaces without being affected by or without perceiving the places in the city where life is shared.

This problem of not knowing the city from a "close distance" includes also the abstract ways of studying Brazilian cities. As noted in chapter II, the IELB used time-centered sociological lenses (from North America) to understand Brazilian cities. Such an abstract way of knowing ended up neglecting specific aspects of the urbanization in Brazil and led to a neglect of important characteristics of *favelas.* As a result, a mission strategy through a program called PEM, which would address urban problems identified through the time-centered sociological theory, became the most significant urban mission strategy in the church, although it did not help the church overcome cultural boundaries. As assessed by Leanordo Neitzel, this mission strategy failed to cross social and geographic boundaries. Rooted knowledge is a contextual way of knowing that can help with this problem. In rooted knowledge, one steps on the ground to walk and encounter people face to face. This becomes the primary way of getting to know one's place and city. This is how congregations which intend to develop mission work in *favelas* need to get to know them.

In chapter one, a place-oriented reading of *favelas* revealed that, in order to get to know a *favela,* one needs to walk its pathways. A pre-conceived map won't help much, given *favelas*' peculiar irregular circulation paths. To get to know a *favela* and to be able to get around it, one needs to step on the ground and walk the terrain, and the best way to do it is to have a local dweller as a guide to walk through the "maze." In other words, understanding *favelas* through the lens of place leads to the conclusion that in order to get to know this built environment, the church needs to use the bodily experience of walking as a way of knowing. But this is not the only conclusion one can draw from this analysis.

When this rooted knowledge is used to get to know the missional field of *favelas,* congregations develop a relational way of denoting space rather than an individualized and impersonal one. The local dweller serving as a guide can offer coordinates and explain how to get around but not by referring to street names and residence numbers, which is what happens when one uses a map or GPS in other areas of the city. Here, the guide will point and say the dwellers' names: "That is the corner house of Mr. Luís, one of the first people who started building here. Down the street there is the small grocery store that belongs to Mrs Maria and Mr. Miguel, an old couple who have raised their own children and now work hard in the grocery store to raise their grandchildren."[1] Notice that getting to know a *favela* involves learning about the people who inhabit them and their stories. Therefore, when one walks in the *favela* and talks to people for orientation and mobility, the movement through space comes to be experienced as personalized and relational. Thus, one gets to know a *favela* as a physical reality in a way that is intrinsically relational and personalized, as one gets to know the people and their stories in the

[1] For more on how Brazilians experience space as far as orientation is concerned, see Roberto DaMatta, *A Casa e a Rua: Espaço, Cidadania, Mulher e Morte no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco), 1997, 25–58.

process of knowing how to get around a *favela.*

It is important to note that this is also how a congregation can get to know the network of relationships into which it is entering when the congregation decides to plant a church in a *favela*. Rooted knowledge (or at least its pursuit) helps congregations see who are the people with whom and the institutions with which it will share a common place, common purposes and concerns. Without a rooted knowledge of the mission field of the *favela,* the missionary or congregation may struggle to get to know the people and the place and fail to perceive the difficulties people face and the problems that need to be addressed.

Rooted and Gifted Presence to the Service of the Natural Environment in *Favelas*

Applying Gorringe's rooted presence to *favelas* also reveals one important problem to be addressed, namely, ecological issues. To give attention to ecological issues—focusing on the negative impact of the activity of building on the natural environment—is particularly relevant in the face of the reality of *favelas.* On the one hand, *favelas* have emerged as the result of urban developments which changed or destroyed the environment uncritically in the pursuit of progress. This was discussed and criticized in chapters I and III. On the other hand, because the displaced ones find land to build only in extreme areas at the limits of the urban perimeter which are not under real-estate speculation, the built environment of *favelas* strongly interacts with mountains, rocks, rivers, and trees. At the higher points of the *favelas* on hills, the built environment affects native Atlantic Forests. In *favelas* on plain soil, the interaction between the natural and built environments affects streams of water. In either case, usually this interaction has a negative impact on the natural environment, which can be seen in most of the *favelas.*

What then is exactly the negative impact that results from the interaction of the natural and built environment in a *favela?* As the constructions go up the hills, for instance, the new houses

and big outdoor stairways (called *escadões*, built to facilitate the access to higher points of the *favelas*) require necessarily that (Atlantic) native trees be cut down to the ground. When *favelas* are too close to riverbanks, often a lot of untreated sewage and waste are dumped into rivers, increasing the hydrographic pollution in the city. In addition, the absence of garbage collection, which should be done by the state, leads to improper disposal and accumulation of garbage, bringing diseases to people and increasing the pollution of forests and rivers. These examples show that the interaction between the built and the natural environments, which is one of Gorringe's helpful points under his approach to the land, reveals a lot of issues to be addressed by congregations as they take rooted presence seriously.

For Gorringe, human rootedness in the soil implies that we have responsibility toward the environment and, more importantly, a responsibility to care for creation as we carry out the activity of building.

However, while Gorringe's rooted presence helpfully affirms these important implications of our emplacement in terms of rooted knowledge and responsibility toward the natural environment, to use him alone leaves deficiencies when it comes to theology and engagement.

Luther's gifted presence, on the other hand, reminds us that we are not merely created as rooted in the soil, but there is also a loving relationship which we receive from God and offer to others. This loving relationship leads the church to action in the land in a way that accounts for the basic structures of creaturely life. Through the model of congregational cruciform engaged presence, the IELB can respond to environmental issues through the first Great Commission, demonstrating this loving relationship toward creation that has its origin in God's love toward the world.

In *favelas*, congregations can attend the first Great Commission regarding environmental

issues by working with the people of *favelas* themselves or with those who already serve people in *favelas* in some way or another. As noted in the first chapter, the built environment of *favelas* embodies a relational culture which, in turn, shapes people's ways of life and even their way of answering the creaturely needs they have. An example of this is the fact that many *favela* houses are built by popular joined efforts of mutual help (*mutirões*);[2] in the face of displacement, people come together and work as a team to answer the creaturely need for shelter. In other words, their relational culture leads to a social strategy that helps them overcome the hardships in life. Congregations entering into this kind of community can work with the people to answer the environmental problems in *favelas.* The local social strategy helps congregations answer this need.

Non-profit organizations whose purpose is to answer the ecological challenges in *favelas* use this social strategy as well. There has been a clear concern for the natural environment in *favelas* at least since the 1980s, when the government changed its way of operating from relocating the people to trying to improve their lives in *favelas.*[3] Today, however, it is the non-profit organizations that develop most of the activities in response to the environmental challenges in these living spaces. Most of these institutions work as a network forming para-local organizations such as *Rede Favela Sustentável* (Sustainable-*Favela* Network) in Rio de Janeiro. Their major way of operating includes lectures on the impact of urban life in the local biodiversity, ecological trails or hiking into forests close to the *favelas*, and activities of removing the garbage from the streets, cleaning rivers, planting gardens and native trees in any green area. In doing all this, these non-profit organizations try to make the dwellers aware of the

[2] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 31.

[3] Renato Meirelles e Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela,* 162.

environmental problems and to form them as agents of transformation for the better of the entire community.

To mention these organizations is important for two reasons: first, while they bring knowledge and techniques to make *favela* dwellers aware of the environmental issues, they still do it in a way that builds on people's engagement as a community. Second, this is important because congregations which decide to enter *favelas* to serve will enter into a network of relationships that includes these non-profit organization. As they do this, congregations or urban missionaries can learn from and help these organizations. Opponents could argue that these organizations are not part of the church, and the environment is not the primary concern of the church. A model of cruciform engaged presence, however, leads congregations to recognize that these institutions are God's instrument of the First Article to sustain and care for the creation. In addition, this theology affirms that, because the horizontal relations and needs matter, Christians engage creation in active love in response to the first Great Commission, and this engagement presupposes that the church, as God's redeemed creatures, still have common purposes with other human creatures.

The gifted presence presupposes the Creed's confession that we receive from God all we need for life in the world as gifts, along with the network of relationships of place. This means, first, that congregations can embrace the relational culture of *favelas* as part of God's good first-article gifts. Second, it also means that among this network of relationships—with people and with place—Christians can gladly share what they have received with other creatures. This gifted presence then opens doors for congregations to think of and address the environmental issues listed above in their engagement in *favelas* in answer to the first Great Commission by working with other people and institutions which already attend creation's needs. This requires, of course,

that congregations be clear on why they are joining in such actions. They do not do it for the purpose of attending either left or right political agendas. Rather, they do it because they want to serve creation and they know that, because of what the church confesses in the First Article, they do not need to invent or create an organization that is distinctively "Christian" if others already do the work well.

In addition to joining good initiatives that already care for the environment, congregations can also promote actions where there is little or no regard for environmental issues. While people in these living spaces have the social strategy called "*mutirões,"* they do not always have the financial and human resources to respond to all of their problems. In light of this need, congregations can promote *mutirões* to answer other problems related to environmental issues.

For example, in the *favela* where this researcher develops mission work in the South region of São Paulo, every year at Christmas season members of the closest Lutheran congregation promoted *mutirões* to clean up a small area where there were a few trees and grass in the middle of the *favela.* Usually, half of the group was church members and the other half was local dwellers. Until this joined effort started, that small green area was a space for inappropriate disposal of garbage, resulting in an unhealthy environment for all and in the pollution of the closest river (as the rain took all of the garbage down to the closest streams of water). After repeating this activity for three years in a row, the dwellers themselves started cleaning the area more often, and today those who live around this small green area no longer allow anybody to put garbage there. In addition, they try to keep the area as clean and green as possible during the whole year. Therefore, the congregation has now started a conversation with local leaders to focus the attention and work on another minor problem. Notice that this is an action that addresses the environmental issues in *favelas* using the local social strategy, respecting local

practices, and calling people to responsibility to action for the benefit of the natural environment. This is an example of things that congregations can try to do to answer minor environmental problems in *favelas* under the first Great Commission, in a way that takes the social strategies of *favelas* into account.

Congregational Cruciform Engaged Presence: A Neighbor-Oriented Critical Presence in *Favelas*

The second major focus of the model regards the ethical problems of dwelling and urban injustices. Initiating a response to these problems, this model appropriates Gorringe's idea of perceptive and critical presence. Through Lutheran theology, it then offers a deeper understanding of these issues, orients the church toward the neighbor and, because of its richer account of creaturely life, offers clearer criteria to assess urban developments and to engage the urban reality. To turn attention to how congregations can perceive the problems of urban injustice, we will consider Gorringe's idea of perceptive and critical presence and the Lutheran cruciform engaged presence.

Perceptive-critical Presence in the Face of the Reality of Favelas

Congregations need to be perceptive and critical of the ethical problems of dwelling in the city. The major problems are displacement and divisions between people groups.

To identify the problem of displacement, think of the urban interventions throughout the history of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In the first chapter, a historical overview of the emergence of *favelas* demonstrated how former slaves and other impoverished people were excluded from the "modernizing scenario" in Rio de Janeiro at the turn of the nineteenth century. This kind of displacement continued in the urban interventions in the 1960s to accomplish housing projects at the heart of São Paulo. These projects, in the assessment of scholar Erminia

Maricato, all failed to promote what she calls "the democratization of the access to the land"[4] in the city, with the result that the impoverished migrants were relegated to more distant, precarious peripheric areas close to riverbanks and slope of hills. In all these interventions, the poor would be either removed from where they lived or would be relocated to another area chosen by the government, causing an increase of precarious living arrangements in the margins of Brazilian metropolises.

Another issue closely related to displacement is the problem of social-spatial divisions in the city. The first chapter explored the government's legalized definition, popular perceptions, and scholarly representations of *favelas* to reveal the social and the temporal dualisms through which Brazilian cities are understood. In such understanding, there is the binary opposition "city vs *favela.*" In particular, two spatial metaphors in daily language reveal a social-spatial division. In São Paulo, the common metaphor is one about the 'two sides of the bridge,' being one side the peripheric space, where one could perceive even a certain cultural absence. In Rio de Janeiro, the metaphor is that of 'the people of the asphalt and the people of the hill.' The asphalt refers to "urban citizens" of different areas of the city, while the hill represents *favelas* and their dwellers, the members of a (supposed) dangerous community. As already explained in detail, these metaphors reflect the experience of urban division and end up reinforcing the problem.

In addition, urban interventions in the second half of the twentieth century in Brazil were shaped by a school of architecture (Le Corbusier's school) that presupposed an anthropology that downplayed the importance of place and even favored "centralized planning" based on people's economic conditions, creating "antagonistic communities."[5] Moreover, when this vision is

[4] Maricato, "Urbanismo na Periferia do Mundo Globalizado," http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0102-88392000000400004.

[5] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment,* 173.

applied to an already-existent city, people are relocated to more distant, peripheric areas, suffering not only the loss of place, but the loss of community bonds as well. The anthropology of the modern city creates a concept of community in which place or geography does not matter, so relativizing the problem of displacement.

Gorringe's perceptive and critical presence helps congregations note that problems of displacement are not mere consequences of the natural progress of history, but they are the result of social construction of place, a construction that often excludes the poor. In addition, Gorringe's perceptive and critical presence helps congregations to understand this displacement theologically. For Gorringe, these are the result of one's alienation from creation and from other people. These alienations are understood as being caused by the economic system, the market, by what Gorringe calls "savage capitalism."[6] Notice, however, that Gorringe's perceptive and critical presence uses as a criterion or lens a political-economic position—one of opposition to capitalism. In addition, he offers a theological understanding of sin focused only in the horizontal relationships and treats this problem as a matter of structural sin only. This analysis of the problem of the modern city, while helpful in many ways, is therefore still limited. The urban challenges of Brazil, through Gorringe's theological analysis of the problem, would be limited to an economic system, and one would be left wondering whether the church should focus only on the horizontal relationships, overlooking the salvation narrative that shapes life and engagement according to the Creed. Therefore, while Gorringe alone is helpful in revealing these ethical problems of building, his approach is limited to form an urban missiology for the Brazilian church.

Gorringe's perceptive and critical presence also addresses problems of division and helps

[6] Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, 238.

the church look at itself to identify possible theologies or attitudes that hinder its own engagement to fight these ethical problems. Although these divisions dehumanize fellow human creatures and elevate one social group to the detriment of the other, churches do not always seem to care about the urban divisions. For Gorringe, one reason for this would be the distorted view that the church is a community of like-minded people. Sheldrake offers another reason. For him, churches not only fail to oppose this problem but also benefit from it because of their fear of mixture. This criticism seems to be fair when one considers the problem that Jacobsen describes regarding how the constructions of highways facilitated the suburban sprawl, when entire congregations moved out, leaving only the poor and immigrants in the inner city. One could argue that those congregations which moved out did it because they wanted to preserve their church culture distinct from the urban communities in their surroundings. This might represent the reality in the USA, and thus this concern would be the focus of another study. I mention this because it is a clear example of how an urban division (an unintended one, according to Jacobsen), hindered the church's presence in the inner cities. Ultimately, my intention is to think of how divisions may affect the church in Brazil.

When one looks at the reality of the Brazilian urban divisions and the IELB in light of the theology of place's analysis, it is important to be careful to not draw misleading conclusions. The IELB's self-preservationist mentality does create a certain separatist attitude, and one might be able to argue that because of this mentality, the IELB is comfortable with the social-spatial divisions of Brazilian cities. This would follow naturally if one just applied the school's criticism to the Brazilian church without carefully analyzing what was discovered in the first and second chapters. According to the data I found and presented in chapter II, the IELB had a mission principle that led the church to focus and make an effort toward the German community, but this

does not necessarily mean that the church enjoys living in a divided society to preserve its theological inheritance and church culture. Of course, this point does not mean that the social-spatial divisions do not affect the church negatively. As shown in chapter I, historical Protestant churches and Roman Catholicism have a very weak presence in *favelas*, and the reason for this absence seems to be the fear of violence. Such a fear is related both to idealized views in modern societies when it comes to safety and to the dichotomist representations that describe *favelas* in terms of lawlessness and the space of burglars and vagabonds. In addition, the urban missiology of the IELB has used such representations that create harsh dichotomization. Therefore, given the data I have worked with in the first and second chapters, the missional ecclesiology of the church needs to address this absence of the church in *favelas* as the result of people's fear (not their fear of mixture but their fear of violence).

Now, how exactly can this problem of fear be overcome? The answer to this question is not found in Gorringe's proposals. While Gorringe is very helpful in showing the importance of a perceptive and critical presence in the city and in offering lenses to identify such problems, his analysis and solutions are limited. His lenses are primarily economic-political positions, which he articulates in terms of structural sin only, focusing on the horizontal relationships. In addition, his solution lacks an account of creaturely life. The Lutheran contribution to the scholarly conversation, on the other hand, supplements Gorringe's work and further helps urban congregations.

A Cruciform Perceptive Presence and the Church's Engagement toward the Neighbor in *Favelas*

A missiology informed by a cruciform engaged presence does not limit its perception and criticism to Gorringe's lenses. While Lutheran congregations need to appropriate the theory of the theology of place to perceive the ethical problems of dwelling and be critical about these

problems, they also use a Lutheran lens to assess the urban reality.

The cruciform engaged presence deepens one's perception of sin. Since Lutheran theology pays attention to the basic structures God established and is strongly oriented toward the protection and benefit of the neighbor, the cruciform engaged presence helps perceive other problems that result primarily from personal sin, and this is important to consider in *favelas*.

Anyone who works as an urban missionary in a *favela* notices that, within these communities, injustices are committed by people who live there against the weakest ones in their midst as well. Often their relational culture and people's enjoyment of socializing with friends result in a fractured family: a father goes to a bar every night to spend time with, as Brazilians call it, *companheiros de copo* ("fellows of cup"—those friends with whom drunkards drink every day), while the mother needs to stay home cooking. The women stay to clean the house, check the kids' notebooks for homework and even go out in the streets late at night to try to find the kids. While the woman does all this alone, the man is still drinking in the bar with his fellows. In addition, conflicts are common in these spaces. While the narrow spaces between houses could be seen as spaces for socialization, as creaturely gifts, they can also easily become locales of gossip or even quarreling between neighbors. In addition, a common characteristic of families in *favelas* is that many homes have no father present. The mothers are single moms, and children grow up thinking that such a situation is natural. Notice that these are all personal sins, not structural ones, although they can become ways of life that become normalized because they are never questioned. In addition, they all undermine the structures God has established for the exercise of our humanity and hurt the neighbor. Thus, they need to be considered as sinful practices to be addressed by the church, although they are not structural sins in economic, market ways. But how can congregations address them in their mission work in *favelas*?

A congregation's primary way of addressing these problems is through its distinctive task of preaching the gospel (in the broader sense, as law and gospel), which is more closely related to the second Great Commission. This will receive more attention later. What is important now is to perceive, through these examples, that the cruciform engaged presence deepens one's understanding of sin in the face of the reality of *favelas*, revealing problems to be addressed.

The cruciform engaged presence offers further understanding of the problem of displacement as well. As the vocational structures of the First Article can help Lutheran theology assess cultural developments, one can think of the consequences of the urban interventions in Brazil through Lutheran theology and can better understand the nature of the problem. The reality of displacement in Brazil means that individuals and families have been removed from their homes during the many adaptations of the urban environment throughout the history of Brazilian Southeastern Metropolises. These families were either left without any shelter or relocated to other areas distant from where most job opportunities were offered, and where the children could go to school. In such a situation, when the parents could still keep their jobs, they needed then to decide whether they would leave the children alone the whole day to go to work or whether they would quit work to take care of the children. In other words, in such a situation, the basic vocational structure of the family has been negatively affected by the urban cultural developments. Therefore, the family, which is to be preserved according to the Fourth Commandment in Luther's explanation in the Larger Catechism, has been undermined in such urban developments.

This point shows how the cruciform perceptive presence of the church proposed by this model can help congregations perceive a problem that undermines that which is the most basic God-given structure for human life. This theology calls attention to how both personal and

structural sins hurt the neighbor and undermine God's good structures in urban Brazil. In addition, because of what Lutherans confess in the Creed and are led to do according to the commandments, these problems require a response from Brazilian Lutheran congregations.

How then exactly can congregations answer all these problems? Part of the church's response to these problems comes from Lutheran theology's orientation toward the neighbor in need through the first Great Commission. When attending the first Great commission to care for those who have suffered displacement and now face the consequences of marginalization and poverty, congregations need to be attentive to what the *favela* dwellers themselves already do to solve their own problems. This means that the relational ways of answering people's own physical, creaturely needs discussed above are important in the church's action here as well.

Answering the first Great Commission in a way that accounts for this relational way of responding to their needs helps congregations avoid falling into caritative paternalistic action. To recognize that the cultural power present in *favelas* is reflected in how people face hardships in life avoids the view that a *favela* is the mere *locus* of poverty, which was common in representations of *favelas* during a long period of their history. This view was the major reason why Christian churches in the past would develop mere "caritative and clientelist" social assistance, to recall Lícia Valadares' words.[7] But since this dissertation tries to help congregations see *favelas* in a way that values their ways of life, another approach is necessary.

This means in practical terms that congregational leaders can try to identify areas in which the congregation can work WITH the people (and not TO or FOR them) to answer perceived needs without neglecting people's own responsibilities in the face of personal and community problems. Such needs might go from improving one's house by joining the *mutirões* or raising

[7] Valladares, *A Invenção da Favela*, 77, 78.

resources for it to offering the space of the congregation in the community for serving the people. What is important is that there may be many needs that the congregation can help the people answer, and the people do not need others to come to fix their problems. *Um País Chamado Favela*, a book giving voice to *favela* dwellers, reveals this very point. The book lists people and non-profit organizations that have worked with *favela* dwellers as a kind of partnership and valued what the book calls "a powerful internal agent,"[8] referring to the community as an agent of transformation. This reveals that *favela* dwellers recognize their own potential and are open to work with those outsiders who envision a better *favela* as well. Congregations can build such partnerships precisely because this model of missiological engagement understands that our confession of presence in creation involves an embrace of the relatedness of place and service toward the neediest ones through the first Great Commission.

The same method applies in addressing the problem of a fear of violence. As already discussed, one of the ecclesiological and missiological consequences of the urban divisions and the dichotomist representations of the city is that the church ends up aligning with the larger society's view and attitude, and this results in an absence of the church in *favelas* because of the fear of violence. How, then, can congregations overcome this fear? To answer this question, it is helpful to look at Cristian Vital da Cunha's findings through the model of a cruciform engaged presence. This sociologist demonstrates that the interpersonal relationships people have in *favelas* sometimes are the only thing that makes them feel safe.[9] People create a network of relationships that help solve internal conflicts and allow the people to be aware of when confrontations among drug dealer groups will take place or when the police is entering the

[8] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 125–32.

[9] In her ethnographic research, Vital da Cunha found out that the state is usually either absent or perceived as bringing more violence to *favelas* as far as the police is concerned. Vital da Cunha, *Oração de Traficante*.

favela. Through the relational culture of *favelas,* people face the reality of violence in these living spaces. I have experienced this in my own work in a *favela* as an urban missionary. Once I had scheduled a devotional time and a soccer match with the youth in this *favela.* Three days before that, a mother called and said: "pastor, do not come! There will be a conflict between a criminal group and the police in our community today." Here, as argued by Vital da Cunha, the relational culture of the *favela* served to address the fear of violence and that protection extended even to me, an outsider and servant of the church.

The church's presence in these living spaces to some extent depends on building relationships to carry out its mission. Rather than neglect sociological aspects of *favelas* and focus attention only on a theological definition of the church, this model helpfully accounts for and values horizontal human relationships within which the Word and sacraments will be faithfully preached and administered according to Scripture. A cruciform engaged presence prevents congregations from neglecting the horizontal dimension of the cruciform life. Instead, within this model, Lutheran congregations can embrace the social strategy used by *favela* dwellers to face the fear of violence, and they can do so as part of their practice of theology. A model of cruciform engaged presence will help congregations of the IELB avoid the problems of social-spatial divisions in the city and attend to the dynamics of place in their missiological endeavors.

The model of cruciform engaged presence offers an answer to the problem Leonardo Neitzel identified in the IELB in the 1990s and early 2000s. As the IELB formed an urban missiology, Neitzel noted the importance of crossing social and geographic boundaries to put the Christ-for-All moto into practice in Brazilian cities. About ten years later, however, he concluded that the church had failed at this very point with its major urban mission strategy (PEM). This

model of cruciform engaged presence is a way forward, advancing and enriching the urban missiology of the IELB and accomplishing this basic step toward crossing cultural and geographic boundaries.

Congregational Cruciform Engaged Presence: Sharing the Cruciform Message that Brings Hope to *Favelas*

Another step toward overcoming this challenge the church has regards the use of the church building. As shown in the second chapter, the church property of Lutheran congregations configured a "less complicated space" in Brazilian cities, where the church rural culture was maintained. How can this challenge related to presence be overcome? To answer this question, it is necessary to discuss questions of contextualization when it comes to presence, so that the church can better carry out its distinctive task through the cruciform engaged presence in the city.

Cultural Sensitivity to Shape Mission Strategy

The starting point to develop a sensitive presence that respects cultural difference in *favelas* is by considering the major characteristics of *favelas.* These characteristics are a high diversity and a relational culture.

Favelas are spaces of high ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. More than half of *favela* dwellers in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo (52%) are migrants who came from all over Brazil during urbanization.[10] *Favelas*, therefore, have a strong ethnic and cultural diversity which represents the many cultures spread throughout Brazil, a country of continental proportions. In terms of religion, the majority of people in these urban spaces are Roman Catholics, charismatic

[10] Meirelles and Athayde, *Um País Chamado Favela*, 33.

Pentecostals, and Afro-Brazilian spiritists. These numbers show that *favelas* have a high ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity.

How do congregations enter these spaces? The approach will be different from entering the monoculture of German immigrants in Brazil, when the Lutheran mission of the LCMS was started. It will also differ from how pastors attended to German descendants living in Brazilian cities by building a school as a mission strategy, the church building, and a church hall, all part of establishing a less-complicated space, in comparison to the surrounding reality of Brazilian cities. To enter the reality of *favelas* requires a theology that leads neither to escapism to a less complicated space for self-preservation nor to ideals of transforming the culture into a "Christian culture," which would fall into a (Christian) cultural imperialism. It requires, therefore, cultural sensitivity and the cruciform engaged presence of the church.

How, then, can Lutheran congregations work in the midst of this diversity? To answer this question, it is necessary to understand the data above qualitatively from a theological perspective. When a congregation looks at the reality of *favelas* in light of the understanding that human life is cruciform, they recognize human beings as relational beings—in relationship with God and with creation, vertically and horizontally. With this vision, the characteristics of *favelas* can be seen as either part of the horizontal or of the vertical dimensions of life.

To affirm the vertical dimension as part of what it means to be a human creature helps one understand the religious diversity in *favelas*. By virtue of being relational beings vertically, human creatures are essentially religious, which means they either believe the true God or create their own gods to fill the void left by the separation from the Creator as the result of sin. Such an understanding is important because it prevents one from thinking of all religious expressions in *favelas* as mere cultural diversity, which belongs to the horizontal dimension. Of course, one's

belief system often is reflected in some cultural practices. The present point does not deny this fact. Rather, this point helps avoid the danger of situating idolatrous religious expressions within the ambit of human culture, resulting in that the sin of idolatry is no longer called out as such. To see life as cruciform avoids this danger, reaffirms the necessity of preaching the gospel, and all this without neglecting our presence in creation in the network of (horizontal) relationships of the First Article.

This affirmation of presence in the First Article is also helpful to analyze the data theologically. The fact that people from all over Brazil came to live in *favelas* implies that they brought their particular cultures with them. This means that their dwellers have many cultural tastes, sing and enjoy music through many different instruments and rhythms, in addition to organizing community life in different ways. All these elements, when viewed in light of the First Article, can be understood as part of God's good creaturely gifts. For the purpose of having a sensitive presence in *favelas,* this means that, just as Lutherans in rural Brazil organized themselves according to the culture brought from Germany, the creaturely gifts of culture among *favela* dwellers can also be put to the service of facilitating the preaching of the gospel in that locality. To use people's ways of life to facilitate the Lutheran church's presence in mission in *favelas* can be seen as part of an intentional effort of congregations to engage this reality to serve and share the gospel, just as the church has already done when the focus of their missionary effort was to establish Lutheran congregations among German Lutherans throughout Brazil.

In spite of all the diversity present in *favelas,* there is one common cultural thread among *favela* dwellers that deserves attention, namely, the strong relational culture cultivated in these living spaces and embodied in the built environment. This characteristic has been explored to propose ways by which the church can care for the environment and attend people's creaturely

needs, both through the first Great Commission. Now, the relational culture can be explored to think of strategies for mission work in terms of the second Great Commission.

Because it presupposes a two-dimensional anthropology, the cruciform engaged presence, values strategies which account for our horizontal relations. This leads congregations to cultivate good relationships wherever they are and, more importantly, to value the relational culture fostered and embodied in *favelas.* This means that congregations which intend to engage this reality in mission need to take an approach that takes relationships seriously.

Perhaps an example can illustrate what kind of change in mission strategy this implies. One wide-spread mission strategy in the IELB is the handing out of pamphlets in the streets. To hand out pamphlets was part of one mission strategy when the mission work was oriented primarily toward German immigrants. In the "port city immigrant missions" mentioned in the second chapter, pamphlets written in German would be handed to the just-arrived immigrants who could read and identify themselves as Lutherans.[11] The strategy then was very helpful.[12] But today, in a strong relational culture like that of *favelas,* the strategy might not be as helpful. This strategy presupposes the literacy of people and that everyone likes to receive such material for free. But these assumptions should not be brought to a *favela*, because not everyone can read in this context, and because the strategy might send the wrong message that the church wants people to believe the gospel but is not willing to relate with them closely. This would be problematic in any relational culture. If, in contrast, congregations put their effort primarily to the building of relationships, they might later give a Bible, a devotional book, or even a simple pamphlet and

[11] Lueking, *Mission in the Making,* 59–63.

[12] Today, handing pamphlets can still be useful for what one could call in-transit evangelistic activity. This activity regards the handing of material to those in the move, at train and metro stations in São Paulo and Rio, in their daily (in-a-rush) commute, for instance. In this case, people do not have time to stop and talk and usually are suspicious of strangers that engage them in conversation. To these people under this circumstance, this strategy may be helpful, if the purpose is that more people have access to God's written Word.

explain how to use them. Then it might be very positive. In this second case, the material given would be perceived as real gift from someone with whom the receiver has a good relationship, mediated by trust.

Another way in which this model leads to a reconsideration of mission practice in *favelas* is related to how congregations assist people with their spiritual needs. Pastors rightly consider the worship service as a time in which the church attends to spiritual needs, but sometimes that is the limit of such service. When that happens, a pastor's presence ends up being limited to the event of the service among the people. Pastors visit the mission point or station once or twice a month to lead a worship service, and that is it. This practice comes from a time when there were a few pastors traveling across cities or even States to assist Lutheran members, with the goal of preserving or generating Lutheran congregations. Notice that in this mission practice from the previous mission model of the IELB (the "home mission principle"), pastors often would be present at the locale only during the event of the service, and would hardly be able to build relationships with people beyond those who were already Lutherans. This is important to say for two reasons: first, this is still a reality today in both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Often mission practice is limited to offering pastoral assistance to those already Lutherans in an area where there isn't a Lutheran congregation yet. Second—and more importantly—in a *favela*, due to its strong relational culture, the mission work requires a much stronger presence.

To have congregational presence that is sensitive to culture in *favelas* means that the pastor and leaders may need to be present there not only during the event of the worship service when the Word is being preached and the sacraments administered, but also at other times to talk to people, to hear their stories, or merely to play soccer with the youth. My own experience as an urban missionary in the *favela* has shown that pastoral care sometimes begins on the soccer field,

because it is there where the youth perceive the pastor as someone who can be trusted. Of course, good interpersonal relationships do not make one a Christian and are not the distinct criterion to determine the existence of the Church in a particular place; it is only through the Word that the Spirit calls people to faith. And yet, it is important to recall that through the Creed we affirm life and presence in creation, which means that the characteristics of being a relational creature are of great importance for the church to better envision the scope of God's mission and the church's participation in it. In this way, by not neglecting the importance of presence and relationships, hopefully, by God's power, pastors may be able to continue the pastoral care started while playing soccer, now during the sermon, having the same youth present in the church during service. When congregations value the horizontal relationships of the cruciform life, they are enabled to make an effort to build relationships with people, helping with the church's sensitive presence in mission in *favelas*.

Once these strategies serve the purpose of participating in God's mission in *favelas*, congregations need to be clear on the message they will proclaim and teach. As proposed in the previous chapter, it is necessary that congregations preach the cruciform message.

The Cruciform Message and the Cruciform-Purpose Church Building in *Favelas*

The cruciform message brings hope to people. It is a message focused on the biblical hope that begins when one is called by the gospel to become God's child and receives a new identity, being called at the same time into a community of believers who share life together.

One could argue that the IELB has always had a clear message that is centered in the article of justification by grace through faith, and thus there would be no need to discuss this point now. In fact, the article on justification has been the basis for the message of the Lutheran church of Brazil. But this emphasis did not prevent the church from a self-preservationist mentality that

hindered intentional work in response to the second Great Commission toward other people groups beyond the Germans. Therefore, it is necessary that the message shared is cruciform, that is, that speaks to our reconciliation with God and that speaks to our active love toward the neighbor.

"Why is it so significant to preach the cruciform message to people in *favelas*?"—one could ask. First, when considered theologically, the problems that cause urban displacement, social-spatial division, and marginalization arise from idolatry. Contemporary urban dwellers in Brazil have built and rebuilt the city to lift themselves above those who cannot afford living in the modern city. This problem has a twofold consequence in the life of Lutheran congregations: on the one hand, individuals are called to a community of faith through the power of the gospel and no longer serve false gods nor do they have the true-identity-loss problem that leads to self-interest or egocentric living; on the other hand—and here is the problem at issue— congregations are situated in particular places and cultural contexts where cultural forces that embody idolatrous ways of life and the diminishing of fellow human creatures are normalized by ideological discourses. These discourses often neglect the injustices committed against the neediest ones and create indifference toward God's given good structures. These cultural forces and discourses might hinder the work of God's kingdom because the divisions created in the city often keep the church away from those who need its help. One clear example of this was offered above, when it was argued that the cruciform engaged presence embraces the social strategy used to overcome the fear of violence. Here is where Gorringe is very helpful, as he and all representatives of the theology of place reveal these problems. Still, while pointing out how these cultural forces hinder the work in the kingdom, his response is limited to the horizontal relations, and the deeper problem of humanity is not addressed. This is another reason why the vertical

dimension of the Christian message is so important, the central narrative of the Creed.

The central narrative of the Creed with the vertical emphasis of the cruciform message—God coming to us in Christ to restore our relationship with himself—is a message that brings hope to Brazilian urban dwellers who have suffered displacement and now live in the margins. Gorringe offers the contribution that helps us see these problems, but the hope he offers is limited to a change in society that reflects God's internal relationality. In contrast, for Lutherans, the vertical dimension of the cruciform message leads us to look at the external, visible, revealed and concrete actions of God for the sake of the concrete and messy world we live in. This message affirms that in the very midst of human messiness, while humans had no power or strength to overcome the separation from the Creator, God the Son came to us, suffered in our place and restored our life with God and gave us hope.

This message is hope to people in *favelas* because the excluded ones, through the story of the gospel, can also be made part of God's family who participate in the expectation for the eternal city to come (whose streets are made of gold). No matter how society treats *favela* dwellers, no matter how they have failed to overcome their own failures, through the cruciform message centered on the vertical relationship, people are born into a new community called church. This community is not limited by boundaries of exclusion. Wherever the Word is present, there the church is present. Wherever one happens to be placed, that is where one can respond to the gospel in faith and to the neighbor in active love; one does not have to leave the *favela* to participate in God's workings and purposes. This is a narrative of rootedness and hope which the church can share through congregational cruciform engaged presence in the city.

This hope has also a horizontal dimension, as the cruciform message speaks of engagement in the world for the benefit of the neighbor. This means that the Christian works toward a better

world for the neighbor. This is not a triumphalist hope in which the reality of sin is overcome and no longer hinders our lives. Nor is it the construction of a city that frees us from our need for God. On the contrary, it is through daily forgiveness and God's revealed law in the commandments that the Christian can try to fight his or her own sinful ambitions and look at reality beyond him or herself, the reality of the neighbor.

In practical terms, as people in *favelas* fight their own egocentric ways of living, they will be encouraged to live more exocentrically, eager to live out their faith toward their surrounding community. This has two important implications: First, the new Lutheran community will need the horizontal teaching of the cruciform message in their fight against sin for the sake of the neighbor. Second, because these people see the relation between public and private in a way that is different from the view which separates the two contexts, they may be eager to live the faith publicly in daily life toward their own community.

This point goes back to what was discovered in the first chapter when the physical built environment of *favelas* was analyzed. Brazilian urbanist and architect Paola Barenstein Jacques notes the different dynamics of public and private spaces in *favelas.* The scholar describes how the narrow spaces in between the houses during the day become and extensions of the house, leading to the perception that such pathways are semi-private spaces. At the same time, because the houses' windows and doors are usually open, allowing neighbors to come in or to talk through the windows, the houses become semi-public spaces. In comparison to other kinds of urban environments, these spatial characteristics of *favelas* lead to a different perception of public and private spaces.

For mission purposes, this means that missiological endeavors that attend to the urban secular division of public life and private faith need to be reconsidered when entering into the

social and physical spaces of *favelas*. Here, the public and private division is much more ambiguous resulting in a different way of expressing the faith in communal life. As a result, it is necessary to offer a different missional-ecclesiological approach when entering into and being part of such a community. Therefore, in addition to finding strategies to reach the people with the gospel through cultural sensitivity, the church needs to think of ways through which the faith can be put into practice in active love publicly in *favelas*.

How then can the church offer such an alternative strategy that accounts for this aspect? Sociologist Vital da Cunha provides a good example. In *Prayers of the Drug Dealers,* she talks about how Pentecostals live out their faith in *favelas.* She says that, for a Pentecostal, the presence of the church in a *favela* brings blessing to the place in some way. Many Pentecostals Christians, she argues, see themselves as agents of God sent to keep the children away from the drug dealers,[13] which results in Christian action for the benefit of the youth. Another personal example illustrates this very same point. In this researcher's mission work in a *favela,* new converts and other participants often complain about how hard it has been to keep the youth away from drugs. "But now," they say, "since we attend this church and have more resources, we can and must do more for these kids." These examples show that once people in *favelas* are called into the community of faith, they are eager to publicly exercise their faith toward their own communities within the horizontal relationships.

This has two implications: the first is that the church cannot be silent about the teaching of the Second Table. As exemplified above, one can perceive many injustices committed at the personal level of sin, and these personal practices become ways of life.

Informed by the cruciform engaged presence, urban missionaries in *favelas* can teach the

[13] Vital da Cunha, *Oração de Traficante*, 122.

Creed and the Ten Commandments to show how our passive reconciliation with God through faith alone leads to a loving relationship with the neighbor within the world (First Article). In doing this, when working with adults in particular, the urban missionary needs to stress that God forgives us and makes us his children through the power of the Spirit on the basis of his mercy only, though Baptism. This emphasis is important because many of them believe they have been too bad or too sinful to be part of God's family, the church. Here, the primary emphasis of Luther's explanation of the Apostles' Creed again is of great importance. And as Luther moves from the Creed to the commandments, so too missionaries can emphasize how, once we have received everything from God, we serve according to the Second Table of the commandments. Luther's emphasis on the high value of the family in one's vocation as a Christian father or mother can be a helpful way of addressing the problems listed above under personal sin in *favelas*.

Since youth are the people group with whom missionaries will probably get to work at first, it may be important to emphasize the Fourth Commandment. The reason for this is twofold: on the one hand, there are Christian groups in *favelas* who favor more an escapist attitude toward the world and teach that children should no longer obey parents or care for the family if the family does not become Christian. Radical Pentecostal groups in *favelas* often create a problem that undermines the first-article structure of the family by creating a harsh separation between Christians and non-Christians. On the other hand, this is important because the youth will perceive that their parents do not live according to the commandments. Of course, the proper teaching on the commandments reveal that no one can fulfill them perfectly. And yet, the children may think that for man to go to a bar and drink while the wife stays home is what it means to be a real man. Or they may notice that their fathers cheat on their mothers as a way of

life and are proud about it. Given that this second example is a very common problem which undermines the structure of the family, the missionary pastor may find it important to stress both the Sixth and the Fourth Commandments. These are just a few examples to illustrate how important it is that the church does not neglect the horizontal dimension of the cruciform message. To attend the Second Table in this way would follow what Luther advised pastors to do during his time: "put the greatest stress on that commandment or part where your people experience the greatest need."[14] In a *favela*, perhaps the greatest need is the family, and these two commandments help attend this need.

In addition to teaching the Second Table of the commandments, the church may need to help those new converts who now want to serve the community publicly. As explained above, the different perceptions of public and private leads to different ways of living out the faith. But how exactly can the church help the people in this regard?

One way of doing it is by offering a resource which *favelas* lack the most, namely, space. The congregation in charge for the mission work can offer the space it uses in the locality as a multi-purpose space for the new converts to serve their own community. This space would function to attend both creaturely and gospel needs, the first and the second Great Commissions. The church building, therefore, would function in a way sensitive to the culture and that serves both the vertical and the horizontal aspects of the Christian message.

In order to do this, it is helpful to remember Eric Jacobsen's models of insular and embedded churches and consider what church type is more culturally sensitive to *favelas* and better helps develop the church's response to the two Great Commissions. In order to answer this question, it is important to remember some of the characteristics of *favelas* and their dwellers.

[14] SC, Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 349.

Favelas usually have narrow spaces for circulation, and the people are more used to walk than to drive. In addition, the way the houses are built leaving narrow alleys between the buildings create a strong "physical proximity"[15] which strengthens their relational way of living. This means that an ample space for parking, like that which is part of the "insular church," does not represent a built environment of a *favela.* In fact, it might be perceived as insensitive if the church builds a compound with ample spaces in a place where people have to be very solidary about how they use the little space they share. The insular type is helpful in that it tries to maintain continuity with the local, everyday built environment, but it is oriented toward the possession and use of personal transportation.

The other type is what Jacobsen calls "the embedded church." It comes from a time when cities were built for people to walk; it has little empty space in between buildings and between the church door and the sidewalk. In fact, this church type is helpful because its front doors lead right up to the sidewalk, facilitating access to the building. These characteristics of the embedded church lead to the conclusion that this type represents a strong church presence and engagement with the surrounding community in a *favela*, which are helpful elements to be desired by urban missionaries in Brazil. But there are other elements to be considered.

According to Jacobsen, the embedded church has a traditional look, which includes a high tower and church symbols as part of the architecture. Now, these are characteristics that may not apply so well to a *favela* church. The reason for this is not that there is no room for traditional elements in *favelas.* The reason is that, on the one hand, the church building would strongly be in discontinuity with the surrounding built environment. This discontinuity would strongly

[15] Jacques, "Estética das Favelas" in Vitruvius 2 (June 2001), http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/02.013/883.

demarcate a separation between the church building and the surrounding environment, and it could be perceived as a harsh separation between the sacred and the profane. This strong demarcation is counter-intuitive if the purpose is an engaged presence that values the relatedness of place and the local culture. In addition, the mission experience my congregation has had in a *favela* shows that people's attendance in church happens when they are coming back from work or going to work. This brings us challenges regarding how to organize the agenda of the new church so that we have a church service at a time when most of the people are returning from the daily commute and feel comfortable dressed as they are. We do not want to create an environment so special that people do not feel comfortable to come in.

What church type then would be a better fit to *favelas?* My proposal at this point is that a *favela* church should be hybrid, combining the helpful elements of both embedded and insular types. In addition, it should be viewed and used as an "enacted space," a term proposed by Jacobsen as well.

To flesh out what this means, consider the hybridity of the church building in a *favela.* As just mentioned, the proximity of the church door to the sidewalk of the embedded church brings a sense of strong engaged presence in a *favela* and facilitates that passers-by just step in to participate in whatever is happening in the building, making it easy for those returning from the daily commute who want to stop by. What Jacobsen calls the insular church contributes to this hybrid model in terms of maintaining a continuity with the surrounding built environment, in the sense that this type does not have a differentiated door to enter the temple nor a high tower that might lead to misconceptions about the nature of the space (like the dichotomized view which completely separates the sacred from the profane). This does not mean that the external look of the building has nothing different from the surrounding environment. Often religious expressions

on the built environment are done in *favelas* through artistic graffiti on the walls or other painting techniques. This point has been observed by sociologist Vital da Cunha as she describes the "symbolic battle" that has taken place between Pentecostal Christians and African-Brazilian Spiritists[16] in *favelas.* Pentecostal Christians who enter this battle have a more triumphalist understanding of Christian presence in the city. Lutherans, as well stressed above, have a different approach.

Lutheran do not need to enter this battle over the built environment. Lutheran congregations can try to give witness through it. For instance, the space where my congregation develops mission work in the *favela* has some art painted on the walls affirming common goods for all and associating it to Jesus Christ. For instance, all people want peace in *favelas*; even drug dealers pray for peace for all the community. Now, in our church building we identify our work as "Urban Peace Initiative," which receives affirmation from the people. But the words of John 14: 27, which say that Jesus leaves us his peace, a different kind of peace, are also painted on the wall, and this makes people start wondering about what Jesus' peace means. This wondering or even confusion sometimes is related to the fact that often Jesus' name is associated with the dominating, triumphalist presence which results in the battle over the built environment. Thus, people come and ask about what kind of Christian message we bring. This is an occasion when the opportunity for sharing the message we carry arises. But notice how our building creates a sense of continuity and discontinuity with the surrounding physical reality; the church building is part of the surrounding environment, but it also points to a truth that one cannot see in a *favela* very often—that there is a different kind of peace which does not involve battling to achieve it and is existent even though we sometimes may face difficulties in life.

[16] Vital da Cunha, *Oração de Traficante*, 360.

Now consider the internal space of the building. Here, we desire to affirm how God is present with people, and here is where the concept of enacted space needs to be brought to the conversation. Enacted space has to do with what makes a place to fulfill its purpose, the purpose it was built or rearranged for. A place is activated or enacted by people using it according to its purpose and when it has the appropriate props that allow the purpose to be fulfilled.[17] The example Jacobsen gives is one about a baseball field. It has a particular purpose, and requires props such as bases, pitcher's mound, and equipment. These props are directly related to the purpose of the baseball field. Now, this place will be enacted when two teams actually are using the props and playing at a particular time. The same is true about a church building, Jacobsen argues: "To really see a church as a place, one must experience it in the context of worship."[18] The props are the people gathered for worship, the minister, the symbols, the altar, the pulpit, the baptismal fountain. When these props and actions are brought together at a particular time for worship, then the church building is fulfilling its purpose.

The point at which all this comes to meet my argument is that a *favela* church building needs to fulfill more than one single purpose. Due to the lack of space and the inappropriateness of building a compound with many different spaces for activities, like a church hall and classrooms, my proposal is that a new congregation in a *favela* needs to have one multi-purpose space that is enacted for worship and Bible teaching purposes on the one hand, and for the purpose of answering people's physical creaturely needs on the other. All the props necessary for worship service need to be brought in for the moment at which the Word will be preached and the sacraments administrated. On the other hand, at other times, when the church is meeting the

[17] Jacobsen, *Sidewalks in the Kingdom*, 17.

[18] Jacobsen, *Sidewalks in the Kingdom*, 17.

creaturely needs of the community, then the props necessary to offer after-school tutoring to youth, cultural activities like theater and music, and other different kinds of activities that answer such needs need to be brought in and used.

The relevance of using the church building as a multi-purpose space is that it would allow the new congregation arising in the *favela* to respond to the two Great Commissions and put their faith into practice publicly. As explained above, because the public and private division is much more ambiguous in a *favela,* resulting in different ways of expressing the faith in communal life, the church needs to think of ways through which the faith can be put into practice in active love through public action. Now, my proposal is that the church's multi-purpose building is used for the new members to exercise their faith publicly, answering the needs of their own community. These needs may go from offering after-school tutoring to providing a space for storytelling or even just for children to play. When these activities happen in the building where my congregation develops mission work, local dwellers in the area come and say: "I really want to help keep the kids away from the streets, away from drugs and other bad stuff. Can I join you?" One local leader who is a member of our church, the first adult Lutheran member in the *favela*, Mrs. Miriam, asked me once: "pastor do you mind if, in addition to opening our space to clean it, I also bring the kids who are in the streets to play inside here with the gate open? I'd been praying to God to send us help, and then he sent the Lutherans. I feel like this is the time for me to really work in the community to try to rescue as many kids as possible." Notice that Mrs. Miriam, who just learned about salvation by grace through faith, now is eager to do something for her community, and the church space can be of help in this endeavor. The space then would in certain times be used for the purpose of answering people's creaturely needs. But this does not mean that the vertical need would be downplayed. The church's space or building is enacted for

the preaching of the gospel when it is time for this to happen.

In this way, the church building functions as a space to proclaim the Christian hope that is situated in the future. At the same time, it is enacted to work toward hope for the present, the hope of a better *favela*, a better city for the dwellers, as the building is a space for the new converts to live out their faith publicly, helping their own geographic community.

In a way, this is similar to how German Lutherans used the school-church building when they lived as less-than fully citizens and could not have a temple that looked like a religious building due to the Brazilian constitution until 1889. To some extent they had to disguise the building in order to have a place for worship. They used the building for schooling the children during the week, and for service on the weekend. Those Lutherans were actively engaged in answering both their community's need for schooling and their need of God's Word. Now, in a *favela*, Lutherans would be doing the same to some extent—having the church building enacted with props for worship and sometimes with props for attending creaturely needs of people. The difference is that now, Lutherans are crossing cultural and ethnic boundaries to do the same toward *favela* dwellers, not by creating a less complicated space to preserve themselves, but in a very complicated (and often messy) place to share what they have richly received from our God, who is Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

Conclusion

By applying the model of cruciform engaged presence in the city to the reality of *favelas*, this chapter has demonstrated how this model appropriates insights from Gorringe and yet also attends to the fullness of Lutheran theology. This model fosters the church's engagement through the two Great Commissions in the city, answering people's creaturely needs in the face of both poverty and marginality on the one hand and addressing the deeper problem of the human

separation from the Creator on the other hand. In so doing, Lutherans can deepen the way a theology of place assesses urban problems and offer an answer that accounts for the two dimensions of the cruciform life.

The model of cruciform engaged presence does more than contribute to the scholarly field of the theology of place, it also contributes to the urban missiology of the IELB. First, it does this by offering a different way of understanding Brazilian cities, a way that is contextual from a rooted-knowledge perspective. This perspective answers the need that arose when the IELB, in the 1990s and early 2000s, used time-centered theories to shape the church's understanding of cities from a strictly cognitive perspective. Second, the application of the model helps the IELB to cross social and geographic boundaries in Brazilian metropoles. As the reader may recall, missional leaders of the IELB have asked for this, but they have not been able to offer a theology that enables necessary culture-crossing practices. And third, the application of this model to *favelas* advances the missiological reflection of the church by proposing a way of becoming strongly present in the city where *favelas* are part of the urban reality. In the past, congregations constructed churches in the city to serve as a "less complicated space" in the urban landscape. Now, they can function differently. Through the model of a cruciform engaged presence, congregations can foster a strong presence and engagement in *favelas* as they attend to the two Great Commissions. They will put into place a practice of engagement that reveals that the church has no boundaries nor margins, but the Word as its center. Through this model, the IELB can direct God's mission in light of this truth.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arand, Charles. "Two Kinds of Righteousness as a Framework for Law and Gospel in the Apology." *Lutheran Quarterly* XV (2001): 417–39.

Barnes, T, and Gregory, D., eds., *Reading Human Geography*. London: Arnold, 1997.

Bartholomew, Craig G. *Where Mortals Dwell*: *A Christian View of Place for Today*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Bergmann, Sigurd. *Theology in Built Environments: Exploring Religion, Architecture and Design.* New Jersey: Transaction, 2009.

———. "Theology in its Spatial Turn: Space, Place and Built Environments Challenging and Changing the Images of God." *Religion Compass* 1, no. 3 (2007): 353–79.

Berry, Wendell. *The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural.* San Francisco: North Point, 1981.

Biermann, Joel D. *A Case for Character: Towards a Lutheran Virtue Ethics*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014.

Blum, Raul, and Seibert, Erni. "Música/ Cristo Para Todos." *Vox Concordiana* 8, no. 1 (1992): 58–59.

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith.* 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002.

———. "The Loss and Recovery of Creation in Old Testament Theology." *Theology Today* 53 (1996): 177–90.

Buss, Paulo. *Um Grão de Mostarda: A História da Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brazil*. Vol. 2. Porto Alegre: Concórdia, 2000.

———. "Relations Between The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and The Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil." Master's thesis, Concordia Seminary, 1981.

Cassey, Edward. *The Fate of Place*: *A Philosophical History.* Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.

Cox, Harvey. *The Secular City: A Celebration of Its Liberties and an Invitation to its Disciplines.* New York: MacMillan, 1965.

Cresswell, Tim. *Place: A Short Introduction.* Malden: Blackwell, 2004.

DaMatta, Roberto. *A Casa e a Rua: Espaço, Cidadania, Mulher e Morte no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1997.

Davis, Jimmy. *Cruciform: Living the Cross Shaped Life*. Hudson: Cruciform, 2011.

Dear, Michael J., and Steven Flusty, eds. *The Spaces of Postmodernity: Readings in Human Geographies.* Malden: Blackwell, 2002.

Dreher, Martin N., ed. *Imigrações e História da Igreja no Brasil*. Aparecida: Santuário, 1993.

———. "A História da Igreja Evangélica Luterana de Confissão Luterana no Brasil." In *Presença Luterana 1990*, edited by Gottfried Brakemeier, 94–104. São Leopoldo: Sinodal, 1989.

Drews, Augusto. 1948c Alguns fatos ocorridos na missão do Mun, Canguçu, R. Gr. do Sul. Novembro de 1948 IHIELB. Porto Alegre. Livro 1 H. 53v, no.151, Item 26.

Eaglestone, Robert. "Postmodernism and Ethics Against the Metaphysics of Comprehension." In *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*, edited by Steven Connor, 182–95. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Flor, Jonas. "Painel de Abertura: A Reforma e a Missão Urbana Hoje." Presentation, Forum de Missão Urbana, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, November 25–26, 2016.

Fukue, Mario Rafael. "A Missão de Deus na Megalópole." In *Testemunho, Misericórdia e Vida em Comunhão: O Futuro da Missão do Cristianismo*, edited by Anselmo Graff, 85–100. Porto Alegre: Concórdia, 2013.

García, Alberto L., and Nunes, John A. *Wittenberg Meets the World: Reimagining Reformation at the Margins.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.

Gonçalves, Dilza Porto. *A Memória na Construção de Identidades Étnicas: Um Estudo Sobre as Relações Entre "Alemães" e "Negros" em Canguçu*. Master's thesis, Pontíficia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, 2008.

Gorman, Michael. *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Paperback, 2001.

Gorringe, T. J. *A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, and Redemption.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Guder, Darrell L., ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for The Sending of The Church in North America*. Gospel and Our Culture Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Hellmann, Osvalso. *A Identidade Teuto-Russo-Brasileira Através de Elementos Culturais e Educacionais Resgatados Entre os Imigrantes do Alto Uruguai Rio-Grandense* (master's thesis, UFRGS, 1991).

Inge, John. *A Christian Theology of Place*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2013.

Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). “Dados do Censo.” Accessed March 22, 2017. http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/.

Jacobsen, Eric. *Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and the Christian Faith.* Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003.

———. *The Space Between: A Christian Engagement with the Built Environment.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.

Jacques, Paola Berenstein. “Estética das Favelas.” *Vitruvius* 2, June 2001, http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/02.013/883.

Kircheim, Augusto. “As Portas da Cidade,” *Vox Concordiana* 15, no. 15 (2000): 36–59.

Knott, Kim. “Religion, Space, and Place: The Spatial Turn in Research on Religion.” *Religion and Society Advances in Research* 1 (2010): 29–43.

Kolb, Robert. “Called to Milk Cows and Govern Kingdoms: Martin Luther’s Teaching on the Christians Vocations.” *Concordia Journal* 39 no. 2 (Spring 2013): 133–41.

———. “Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness; Reflections on His Two-Dimensional Definition of Humanity at the Heart of His Theology.” *Lutheran Quarterly* XIII (1999): 449–66.

Kolb, Robert, and Arand, Charles P. *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Kolb, Robert, and Timothy J. Wengert, eds. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.

Lange, Ari. “Tribuna.” *Vox Concordiana* 8, no.2 (1992): 5–6.

Light Andrew, and Jonathan M. Smith, eds. *Philosophies of Place*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998.

Lilburne, Geoffrey. *A Sense of Place: A Christian Theology of the Land.* Nashville: Abington, 1988.

Luedke, Reinaldo. “A Igreja na Cidade.” *Vox Concordiana* 15, no. 15 (2000): 25–35.

Lueking, F. Dean. *Mission in the Making: The Missionary Enterprise Among Missouri Synod Lutherans 1846–1963*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1964.

Luther, Martin. *Luther’s Works.* Vols. 1–8, 39, 40. Philadelphia: Fortress; Saint Louis: Concordia, 1955–86.

MacMath, Terence Handley. “Interview: Tim Gorringe, Professor of Theology and Religion, Exter University.” *Church Time,* August 30, 2013. https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/41844.

Malpas, J. E. *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

———. *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World.* Cambridge: MIT, 2006.

Maricato, Ermínia. "Urbanismo na Periferia do Mundo Globalizado: Metrópoles Brasileiras." *São Paulo em Perspectiva* 14, no. 4 (Oct./Dec. 2001).

Marquardt, Rony Ricardo. *A Contextualização na Ação Missionária da Igreja*. Canoas: Ulbra, 2005.

Meirelles, Renato, and Athayde, Celso. *Um País Chamado Favela.* São Paulo: Editora Gente, 2014.

Meyer, Carl S. ed. *Moving Frontiers*. Saint Louis: Concordia, 1964.

Nafzger Peter H. *These Are Written: Toward a Cruciform Theology of Scripture*. Eugene: Pickwick, 2013.

Neitzel, Leonardo. "A Missão da IELB." *Vox Concordiana* 8, no. 2 (1992): 13–21.

Niebuhr, Richard. *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*. New York: World, 1957.

Oliven, Ruben George. *Urbanização e Mudança Social no Brasil.* Rio de Janeiro: Scielo, 2010.

———. *A Antropologia de Groupos Urbanos.* Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 2007.

Osmer, Richard R. *Practical Theology: An Introduction.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Queiroz Filho, Alfredo Pereira de. "Sobre as Origens da Favela." *Mercator* 10, n. 23 (set./dez. 2011): 33–48.

Rehfeldt, Mário. *Um Grão de Mostarda: A História da Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brazil.* Vol. 1. Porto Alegre: Concórdia, 2003.

Relph, Edward. *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion, 1976.

Reunião de Diretoria da Igreja Evangélica Luterana da Paz de Rio Bonito, São Paulo, Maio/1975, Livro de Atas da Congregação da Paz (Book of Minutes), Arquivos da Congregação da Paz, São Paulo.

Rieth, Ricardo Willy. "Evangélicos de 'Alma Branca': Os Negros e o Protestantismo no Brasil." In *Brasil: Outros 500. Protestantismo e Resistência Indígena, Negra e Popular*, edited by Hock Ingelore Starke, 172–200. São Leopoldo: Sinodal/EST, 1999.

Santos, Milton. "Espaço e Sociedade no Brasil: A Urbanização Recente." *Geosul* 2, n. 5 (1988): 85–100.

Schueler, Oswaldo. "A Leitura do Tempo." *Lar Cristão*. Porto Alegre: Concórdia: 1974, 104–08.

Seibert, Erní Walter, ed. *A Missão de Deus Diante de um Novo Milênio.* Porto Alegre: Concórdia, 2000.

Sennett, Richard. *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities*. London: Faber & Faber, 1993.

Silva, Jailson de Souza, Jorge Luiz Barbosa, Mariane de Oliveira Biteti, Fernando Lanis Fernandes, eds. *O Que é a Favela, Afinal?* Rio de Janeiro: Observatório de Favelas, 2009.

Soja, Edward. *Seeking Spatial Justice.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Sheldrake, Philip. *The Spiritual City: Theology, Spirituality, and the Urban*. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2014.

Swelflow, August R. *Heritage in Motion.* Saint Louis: Concordia, 1998.

Teichmann, Eliseu. *Imigração e Igreja: As Comunidades-Livres no Contexto da Estruturação do Luteranismo no Rio Grande do Sul.* Master's thesis, Faculdades EST, 1996.

Yi-Fu, Tuan. *Space and Place: A Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

Valladares, Licia do Prado. *A Invenção da Favela: Do Mito de Origem a favela.com.* Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 2005.

Val, Sylvio dos Santos. "A Metrópole Brasileira: Origens e Perspectivas." *Perspectiva Sociológica* 4, no. 5 (2010): 1–13.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. ed. *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010.

Vieira, Celiane da Rocha Witt. *A Messianic-millenarian Movement in Brazil: Canudus/ BA 1893–1997*. Master's thesis, Concordia Seminary, 2018.

Vital da Cunha, Christina. *Oração de Traficante*. Rio Comprido: Editora Garamond, 2014.

von Rad, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology*. Vol 1. Translated by D. M. G Stalker. Endinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962.

Warf, Barney, and Santa Arias, eds. *The spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

White Jr., Lynn. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–37

Wirzba, Norman. *From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving the World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015.

Ferreira, Ivanir, “Estudo Mapeia Condições de Faveas em São Paulo.” *Jornal da USP*, February 02, 2017. http://jornal.usp.br/ciencias/ciencias-humanas/estudo-mapeia-condicoes-das-favelas-em-sao-paulo/.