Course CM Egypt Sept. '08 (4) The Challenge of Urbanization and Globalization

Niek M. Tramper

Trends and developments in urbanization.

We start with the painting 'Imaginary city' of the Dutch painter Janneke Viegers (slide 1). What does it say about the modern city? What is special about the city (opposite to rural areas?

Trends worldwide (slide 2)

- People of 21st century are city people: more than half of World population lives in megacities; coming year this will be 3,3 billions
- Every week one million new city dwellers, roughly 180.000 per day.
- In the year 2030 (according to UN-prognosis) 5 billions of people will live in big cities.
- Urbanization is already going on for thousands of years, but it never has been so rapid and so massive compared to our age. In Africa within one generation city populations will be doubled (United Nations Population Fund, report 2007).

Looking at continents (slide 3)

- 80% of new city dwellers lives on one of the continents Africa, Asia and Latin-America.
- Most new city dwellers will be poor and mainly live in slums. Now 1.0 billion lives in slums (below a reasonable life standard).
- Between 2000 and 2030 in Asia the amount of city dwellers will grow from 1,36 billion to 2, 64 billion. In Latin America from 394 to 609 million. Africa is the quickest: from 294 to 742 million.
- In Europe and North-America growth is much less. These areas are already urbanized greatly (now roughly 70% city dwellers in Europe and 82% in North-America). Here we find growth of cities under 500.000 inhabitants. Compare: Tokyo has 35 million inhabitants, as much as in the whole of Canada!

Why people are attracted by the city and what are consequences? (slide 4)

1. In Europe the great wave of urbanization was from 1750 to 1950. Main reason was the Industrial Revolution. Now birth rate of western nationals is negative. Population of westerns nations only grow through immigration. In northern Europe e.g. especially by immigration of Turkish and Moroccan people, with a strong positive birth rate.
2. We speak about a *second wave* of urbanization on the other continents in the last and this century, very different from the one in the West and also caused by different factors.
    a. Many people have been driven to the city because of war and tribal tensions.

b. Climate change and because of that dryness and floods make harvests fail and thrive people from their land. The only possibility is to go to the city.

c. In rural areas where birth rate is positive unemployment and poverty thrive people to the city.

3. Most new inhabitants will become dwellers of slums. Here they don´t have basic provisions for life, like clean water, housing, sanitary provisions, education and healthcare.

4. ´Cities can be centers of hope , of new chances for economic growth, education, to escape from poverty and social isolation. Much depends on the vision and political will of local and national authorities´ (mr. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, president of UN Peoples Fund)

5. But: because of the fact that the majority of new city dwellers is under 25 and unemployed, they can be attracted to religious radicalism.

Ⓟ ***Reflection about the challenge of our city and what Christian can do to make difference (slide 5).***

1. What are the main problems (spiritual, social, economical etc.) in the area where you live.

2. In which respect you think that God calls you to make any difference in this environment?

3. How can the Christian church make any difference in this environment?

Globalization

Globalization is the worldwide process though which we all become inhabitants of one ´World village´.

Factors provoking globalization

- The process of industrialization, that started in the 17th century and was seconded by the process of secularization in the West. This is what we in Europe call ´The Modern Age´ (after the period of the Middle Ages).

- The communication technology which has developed enormously in the last 30 years (fax, telephone, satellites, TV, internet etc.)

- The process of growing mobility which brings big people movements across the earth (both freely and compelled).

- Wars, problems and disasters, but also factors like climate change require global solutions. Local problems can grow very quickly unto international conflicts. Questions like poverty, aids, refugees, criminality, terrorism, energy sources, climate etc. cannot be solved nationally, but require international and even global solutions.

Consequences

- Societies become multicultural and multi-religious societies
- The raise of ´secundary or artificial communities´(like a school, a shopping mall, an office, etc) at the cost of ´primary communities´ (like a family, a village, a tribe).
- The ambiguous role of religion in globalization. At the one hand fundamentalism (stressing primary communities). At the other hand acceptance of multi-cultural and multi-religious society.
- The growing dichotomy between rich and poor.
- Plurality: especially for the rich the possibilities to choose are endless. Many articles, many products, many provisions for education and health care, many ways to travel, etc.
- Secularization. Globalization means an open gate for new, secularized standards: man can live without God (or makes materialism and consumerism his god), he feels independent, has the tools in his hand to reach the whole world and to be informed from every place in the world. The most important for him is not his obedience, but the freedom to choose.
- At the same time: great possibilities for the Gospel through international contacts, internet and other media like satellite!

The example of Genesis 4:16-22 ´East of Eden´ (slides 6, 7, 8)

Ⓟ Reflection:

1. What items in this part of Scripture reflect the problems of urbanization and secularization?
2. How can we ´think globally´ and ´act locally´?