

- I. RoadVision: Inhabit Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor February 8, 2009  
Our vision is to be a church that creates a loving community for everyone!

## II. **Community Lost!**

- A. Weather Channel, When Weather Made History, Chicago heat wave 1995
- B. Eric Klinenberg's Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago researches the social problems that led to so many deaths.
- C. Publisher Comments: On Thursday, July 13, 1995, Chicagoans awoke to a blistering day in which the temperature would reach 106 degrees. The heat index, which measures how the temperature actually feels on the body, would hit 126 degrees by the time the day was over. Meteorologists had been warning residents about a two-day heat wave, but these temperatures did not end that soon. When the heat wave broke a week later, city streets had buckled; the records for electrical use were shattered; and power grids had failed, leaving residents without electricity for up to two days. And by July 20, over seven hundred people had perished—more than twice the number that died in the Chicago Fire of 1871, twenty times the number of those struck by Hurricane Andrew in 1992—in the great Chicago heat wave, one of the deadliest in American history.

Heat waves in the United States kill more people during a typical year than all other natural disasters combined. Until now, no one could explain either the overwhelming number or the heartbreaking manner of the deaths resulting from the 1995 Chicago heat wave. Meteorologists and medical scientists have been unable to account for the scale of the trauma, and political officials have puzzled over the sources of the city's vulnerability. In *Heat Wave*, Eric Klinenberg takes us inside the anatomy of the metropolis to conduct what he calls a "social autopsy," examining the social, political, and institutional organs of the city that made this urban disaster so much worse than it ought to have been. Starting with the question of why so many people died at home alone, Klinenberg investigates why some neighborhoods experienced greater mortality than others, how the city government responded to the crisis, and how journalists, scientists, and public officials reported on and explained these events. Through a combination of years of fieldwork, extensive interviews, and archival research, Klinenberg uncovers how a number of surprising and unsettling forms of social breakdown—including the literal and social isolation of seniors, the institutional abandonment of poor neighborhoods, and the retrenchment of public assistance programs—contributed to the high fatality rates. The human catastrophe, he argues, cannot simply be blamed on the failures of any particular individuals or organizations. For when hundreds of people die behind locked doors and sealed windows, out of contact with friends, family, community groups, and public agencies, everyone is implicated in their demise.

As Klinenberg demonstrates in this incisive and gripping account of the contemporary urban condition, the widening cracks in the social foundations of American cities that the 1995 Chicago heat wave made visible have by no means subsided as the temperatures returned to normal. The forces that affected Chicago so disastrously remain in play in America's cities, and we ignore them at our peril.

- D. Max Lucado states that: "We are people of both dignity and depravity. Hurricane Katrina blew back more than roofs; it blew the mask off the nature of mankind. The main problem in the world is not Mother Nature, but human nature. Strip away the police barricades, blow down the fences, and the real self is revealed. We are barbaric to the core.

He adds that we were born with "a me-first mentality."  
"You don't have to teach your kids to argue. They don't have to be trained to demand their way. You don't have to show them how to stomp their feet and pout, it is their nature... indeed it is all of our nature to do so. 'All of us have strayed like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own,' (Isaiah 53:6).

Lucado says that God's chosen word for our fallen condition has three letters: *s-I-n*. Sin celebrates the letter in the middle. 'I' Left to our own devices, we lead a godless, out of control life of '...doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it' (Ephesians 2:3 MSG).

## III. **Community Found!**

- A. The Christian understanding of the world is that when we lost our connection to God, we lost our connection with each other, which ultimately leaves us disconnected even with ourselves.

B. A part of our belief is that the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's best effort at restoring relationships, community, and ultimately Love.

C. *(Acts 2:38-47 NRSV) Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. {39} For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." {40} And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." {41} So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. {42} They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. {43} Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. {44} All who believed were together and had all things in common; {45} they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. {46} Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, {47} praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

D. John Burke, *No Perfect People Allowed*: I'm convinced that to be effective, the emerging church must create a culture of connection for a generation alone. If the Boomer generation valued anonymity above all else when coming to church, emerging generations value connection above all else. It doesn't matter how hip the music, how funny the pastor, how postmodern the vibe, if a person comes and sits alone, feeling unconnected as an "outsider" week after week, she won't come back. This is especially true of spiritual seekers. Nobody wants to feel alone.

#### IV. The Sunday Morning Experience

A. Greeters talking to each other

B. Section Hosts

C. Everyone should be on the lookout for people who are sitting or standing alone.

D. That should be our culture.

E. If you see someone you know, you know you speak to them.

F. If you see someone you don't know, the tendency is to pass them by.

G. Why not speak to them.

H. Our meet and greet.

1. Old meet and greet was too long and I had lots of positive feedback from Church people. We all liked it.
2. New people just visiting looking for a church were positive.
3. By and large, people who were just coming back or skeptical about church felt very uncomfortable.
4. No matter where we do it in the service there was a problem.
5. Many people aren't even in the building at the time we do it.
6. But we also had lots of feedback that people felt it interrupted their vertical worship connection with God.
7. New people tend to arrive early.

#### V. A Place to Connect

A. One of the first slogans we used to tell people at CrossRoad was that our Vision was to be a place where people connected.

B. The first message I shared was about our *Vision to see people connect with God, others and ultimately themselves*. I do think the order is a little important.

C. John Burke, Four ways of Connection:

D.Through Compassion

E.Through Pain

F.Through Service

G.Through Affinity

H.As I read these, I realized that those four ways exist at CrossRoad and that this was a great time to educate and celebrate about how we connect at CrossRoad.

#### VI. Compassion

A.One of the best ways that we see people connect is by engaging in ministry together.

B.Windy Hill

C.Silver Creek

D.Simpson Memorial

E.Kairos

F.City Rescue Mission

G.HabiJax

H.Family Promise

I.Haiti, Costa Rica, Trips with Len Ministries

J.Boxes of Love

#### VII. Pain

A.To eliminate suffering in the name of Jesus. Even reduce or just be present in suffering.

B.One of the most amazing testimonies of seeing a group respond to human suffering was recently printed in the editorial section of the Times-Union: Cheryl King of Tallahassee has an impressive story to tell: I recently lost my 24 year old son, Ryan, to a cancer after a five month battle. He was a member of CrossRoad U.M.C. and a youth group called ACCESS 218, affiliated with CrossRoad United Methodist Church.

Their continuous and intense kindness, caring, prayer and support for my son during his illness were just overwhelming to me, since these people started out as strangers to me. However, they showed me the same kind of support they did for my son, in which I received great comfort.

a. They were even able to have someone come to Indianapolis where my son was for two months when he first fell ill. Ryan lit up every time someone from his church showed up.

“Never have I ever experienced such consistent caring and compassion. I will never be able to thank them enough and wanted to publicly do so.

Four of the ...group members drove from Jacksonville to deliver us some gifts and decorations. They want nothing in return, just to help people. it’s really amazing and these young folks are highly educated and hold fairly high positions within the church.

b. A beautiful story.

c. Pastor George also ministered to the family and actually officiated at the Memorial Service.

d. YAY God, YAY ACCESS, YAY for groups to respond to pain.

#### VIII. Service

A.Heather Maclaughlin: God is so good! I give Him all the glory for the opportunity to work with you guys, but I would like to thank you for listening to him and extending an invitation to cook for those you are trying to reach. As I explained why I keep “cooking for the church” to Ryley (her oldest daughter), I realized just how significant my role is and I am more filled with Joy than ever before. I told Ryley that while you guys are making friends with people that might not know Jesus that you were all eating our food just like

Jesus did with those he was trying to reach! WOW! Ryley didn't get a lesson, I did! I'm no longer cooking for some random people at some function that I don't know much about. It's personal! I'm providing comfort and incentive for people seeking Jesus. Nothing is insignificant is it? Thank you again for this opportunity....

B.Greeters, Section Hosts

C.Youth Leaders, Children's Ministry, Wednesday Workers

D.Events: WCA Leadership Summit, Fall Festival, Christmas Musical, Outreach Productions: Super Heros, need set builders and production teams.

E.Choir, Worship and Production Teams

F.DOTS: Monthly Birthday Lunch Party, Christmas Party, go to Costco each Friday for Pizza and Hot Dog deal. My favorite. People want to join them! This group will show up for envelope stuffings, food for memorial services, Children's Ministry reception, etc.... They are the demographic I target the least. Number one, they are pretty hip and cool, but I think they also know that this is a church where their children and grandchildren may connect. So it is not about them, but in the process, they are finding community, a sense of purpose, and ultimately they know love and joy

## IX. Affinity

A.Being with people like you, either age or place in life. Sometimes it is even geographic.

B.One of the ways we approach discipleship at CrossRoad is through, *Paths Not Programs*.

C.Hi Gee, Just want to let you know that I was inspired by your message on Sunday. I am so grateful for CrossRoad Church. Tony and I had attend CrossRoad about 4-5 years ago and for whatever reason we didn't stay but after we had our triplets, Liam, Lourdes and Logan we felt like we needed to get on the ball about finding a church family. We came back to CrossRoad Church and fell in love. We attended regularly for a year but didn't get really involved until last year when we joined a small group. The group has been great for me and I have really made a connection with the women. I am at church practically every day with the kids going to Kingdom Kids Preschool, Tony and I going to MarriedLife, me attending Mom2Mom and now the Women's Bible study with Sandy. I feel a yearning and desire for Jesus like I haven't felt in years. I totally believe it is related to the relationships I have developed at church. I think about God all the time and how I can be a better wife, mother, friend, and person. I have felt a desire to do something to give back—I just don't know what—but I am open. I just wanted to let you know that I appreciate you so much and I love that God brought me again to CrossRoad. God Bless you, Dawn Karlovich

D.MAP

EFOUNDATIONS

F.Crown Ministries (New Class 2/19)

G.Experiencing God

H.Marriage on the Rock

I.Several Women's Bible Studies in different locations and times. Women's Bible study groups, i.e. Tuesday A.M. & P.M., Peggy Broach's group, Charlotte Boucher and Traci Barron's group, LOL Sisters. Most of these groups except for the last two have been meeting for years and have formed strong bonds.

J.Mom2Moms

K.Youth, ACCESS218, A218Forward, MarriedLife Live

L.Koinonia Class

M.Small Groups

N.Area Care Coordinators

## X. Don't live alone

- A.Klinenberg discovered those who died in the 1995 Chicago Heat Waves "...was kind of evenly divided between African-American and white and almost no Hispanic and almost no Asian," Willhelm said.
- B.A study found that communities where the elderly live alone like Hispanic Little Village had far fewer fatalities than other communities like North Lawndale which is predominately African-American and only a few blocks away. One reason: Little Village is booming; North Lawndale is blighted.
- C.Klinenberg said, "It's not just about race and it's not just about what individuals do. Place and neighborhood actually matters a lot for our everyday health and for our ability to survive a crisis."
- D.In the Weather Channel broadcast, it reported that the Hispanic and Asian communities knew who was alone and reached out. They came out in the streets. They met and took care of each other, especially the elderly.
- E.Klinenberg said, "It's an open secret in Chicago that our cityworks also has these undersides -- everyday crises that we need to address. The challenge is: can we do that when there's not a disaster so we can prevent a real disaster from taking place?"
- F.That is the part of what it means to be a resident in the Kingdom of God.
- G.We don't let each other die in the Heat Waves.
- H.We don't let people live their lives alone.
- I.I hope this message has challenged you to find a place to Connect at CrossRoad, first for your own sake, but ultimately for the sake of others.
- J.Jesus also came, so that you don't have to feel alone.
- K.When I was 14, feelings of being alone overwhelmed me. I was shorter than most of my friends, chubby, and had more than my share of zits.
- L.Since the night I began a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, I have rarely ever felt alone. Also I have been on a bit of Community, to bring people out of the Heat Wave, out of isolation and into a community of love.
- M.Invitation.