

PROMISE:

REBUILD, RESTORE, AND RENEW

Have you ever wondered about God's intention for geographical locations? Maybe you've walked through your neighborhood wondering what it means to see His Kingdom on Earth as it is in heaven. Or maybe you've been in conversations that lead you to believe maybe, just maybe, we could experience healing in the land as well as among the people. Could a city be rebuilt in a way that exemplifies the ways of the Kingdom and if so, what would that look like?

Every city has a spiritual history. There is a story that begins at the very beginning with God. An intentionality that existed as He formed the earth and spoke life into being. Both individuals and People groups add their own spiritual history to that of the land, creating a woven tapestry that speaks of the beauty, the joy, the trauma and the pain that was carried here.

And through that history, we can begin to see plans and purposes, ways that God designed, for both us and for geographical regions.

In Acts 17, Paul speaks to those in Athens:

"People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything. Rather, He Himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that

they should inhabit the whole earth; and **he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.** God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

Paul used the spiritual history of the city to preach to the heart cry of the people. He looked around and saw the idols they were worshipping but he also found something that pointed to the true Creator - this statue of an unknown God.

We often see the destiny of a place trying to be worked out in the culture of that place because God put eternity in our hearts, and he fashioned us for specific places, that we would seek after Him and in seeking that we would find Him.

The intricacies of His design are incredible. We see it in the beauty of a snowflake or in the work of a spider making a web, but here it is an example of the interconnectedness of time and space and people. Unimaginable detailed thought falls on a winter day, or slides by on the corner of a roof, or reveals itself to us in a city that is bursting with creativity and innovation.

Mother Theresa said every time she looked into the face of the poor or in the eyes of someone who was dying, she saw the face of God. It did not matter what their faith was or their title or anything they had ever done in the world. Each one was created in the image of God and bore some piece of revelation of who He is.

Geographical locations can be seen in the same way – each piece of creation bears a reflection of His beauty, His grace, His nature. Even the rocks will cry out and the trees will sing His praise if we do not. All of this was beauty we see in nature was created to bear witness to Him, to draw us nearer to Him. And cities in those geographical locations are really just a reflection of the community that bears a diverse reflection of who He is while offering the hope of a city that is yet to come.

Sitting with the history of Portland, a team of leaders identified years ago seven areas that may be ways God has designed Portland to reflect His character and His Kingdom. We have turned these into prayers.

As you read through these, consider what God may be saying as to how we build from here. What does the promise look like for us as the people of Portland?

Take some time at the art table and draw or write your reflections.

PRAYER POINTS

- 1. That Portland would be known as a place of mothers and fathers; those who help lead new generations into the identity God has given them, continuing to walk beside them in all seasons of life. We pray for Spirit of Adoption by which we cry out Abba Father to be poured out on the people of our city.**
- 2. That Portland would be known as a city of Justice and mercy. For our hearts to break for the things that break God's heart and that we would work towards reconciliation, healing and the flourishing of all people.**
- 3. That Portland would be City of Refuge. That all would find safety and welcome here, and rest for weary souls.**
- 4. That Portland would be filled with Redemptive Creativity. Let the arts be filled not with religion, but with Your presence. May we see art used in ways that brings healing to our land. Let new songs rise from our streets, let poetry be written on our arms.**
- 5. That there would be Fruitful prosperity and generosity; new ways of viewing and using money that would offer hospitality and resource to meet the many needs of a city being rebuilt.**
- 6. That Portland would be known as a place healing and a place of unity. That our kindness and love for one another would release life and hope to those even in the darkest places.**

7. That Portland would be a city of prophets; Those who see, who hear, who understand the times and know what to do to raise up the age old foundations.