

Missional Ministry to Marginalized Peoples

A WCA Report

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you,
whatever you did for one of the least of these
brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

Matthew 25:40

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Missional Ministry to the Margins

A WCA Report

Introduction: The call to discipleship is an invitation to follow Jesus on his mission to “seek out and to save the lost.”¹ Throughout the gospels Jesus notices and ministers to the least and the lowly. These include widows, lepers, children, women, foreigners, and others deemed outsiders in his day. As we seek to be faithful followers of Jesus we must extend the ministry of the gospel to those living on the margins of our society. The Global Methodist Church is steadfast in our commitment to embodying missional ministry to those living on the margins.

Marginalized People Groups: Marginalized peoples are those who are not embraced by or are excluded from a dominant culture or community. A marginalized person or people group is often set apart from the larger body by one or more key distinctions and are thus negatively impacted. At times this distinction is a lack of access to finances, employment, or housing. At other times this distinction may be belonging to a minority race, nationality, religion, or linguistic group. Still at other times this distinction may be related to ability, sexual brokenness, or addiction. A host of distinctions can create marginalized people groups and these circumstances often vary based on context. A person with a particular distinction in North America may not suffer exclusion whereas the same set of circumstances may result in isolation or harm in a different global context.

We urge congregations to ask the question, “who in our local community is isolated and living on the margins?” Jesus doesn’t provide us with a tidy category for determining marginalized peoples. Rather, he provides us with a model to care for the outcast and stranger, the hurting and the sick, and the overlooked and the despised.

Scriptural Precedent: Ministry to marginalized peoples is not an optional item or add-on ministry for Christians - it is essential to our identity. There are a number of biblical precedents for missional ministry which span the scriptures. The covenantal law code of the ancient Hebrews was one of the most compassionate of the ancient world. Israelites were to care for strangers in their midst, leave gleanings in their fields for the hungry, and forgive debt every seven years.² This boundary-crossing care for people on the margins continued to be expressed in the communities of the early church. Paul’s ministry carried the good news of the gospel to gentiles, expressed a concern that the Lord’s Supper be observed as the place where rich and poor come together in unity, and throughout his journeys Paul collected a generous offering for the poor in Jerusalem.³ Perhaps our most compelling witness for missional ministry to the margins is the life of Jesus. Our Lord continually ate with those deemed to be sinners, he embraced the tax collectors, prostitutes, and lepers, and he spoke of the kingdom call to serve the hungry, naked, and imprisoned.⁴ The entire sweep of scripture indicates that God’s people are to be those who extend the good news of the gospel to a hurting world.

¹ Luke 19:10 New Revised Standard Version

² Lev. 19:33-34; Lev. 23:22; Deut. 15:1-4 New Revised Standard Version.

³ Acts 13; 1 Cor. 11:17-22; 2 Cor. 8 New Revised Standard Version.

⁴ Matt. 9:10; Luke 17:11-19; Matt. 25:31-46 New Revised Standard Version.

Goals of Missional Ministry to the Margins: To what ‘end’ do we engage in missional ministry to marginalized peoples? There are a number of possibilities, all of which may not be accomplished at any given time.

- *Obedience to our Lord:* Every person who identifies as a disciple has heard the call of Jesus to “follow me.” Not only does Jesus personally go to the least and the lost, but he commands love of God and neighbor. In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Jesus commends those who care for their neighbors in need as having cared for the Lord himself. One of our objectives in engaging in missional ministry to those on the margins is to be faithful to follow the call of Jesus.
- *Alleviate Human Suffering:* In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the traveler has fallen into the hands of robbers and has been left wounded on the side of the road. The Good Samaritan provides shelter and cares for his wounds. Much of our ministry to those on the margins will be to alleviate human suffering. We may address immediate physical, emotional, or economic forms of brokenness. The Good Samaritan is able to alleviate suffering in a particular moment of hardship for the traveler. Much of our ministry will be the extension of mercy to alleviate pain and suffering.
- *Contribute to Human Flourishing:* In certain circumstances our goal will be to elevate the current situation of our neighbors to a place of greater security and stability. We will seek to prevent future crises through the work of creating sustainability and personal development. This may take the form of education, discipleship, employment, etc. Just as Christians continue to be changed from “glory into glory,” we seek to help our neighbors grow into the thriving people God intends for them to be.
- *Community Partnership:* At times the ministry of our churches to marginalized people groups will be most appropriately a collaborative effort. Through partnerships and shared prayer, planning, and visioning, ministries may work to establish a greater sense of personal dignity, ownership, and foster greater community. One possible goal of missional ministry to the margins is the empowerment of individuals and communities and the creation of enduring partnerships.
- *Conversion and Discipleship:* Our desire is to see God glorified and lives transformed by the power of the gospel. One of our objectives with missional ministry to marginalized peoples is to facilitate conversion and discipleship encounters. When possible, ministries would do well to have a proclamatory component. At other times ministries may serve as connection points to a local congregation. At all times, ministry volunteers and leaders should conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Recommendations to the WCA: As we discern the direction for a new denomination, the Missional Ministry to Marginalized Peoples Task Force would like to make the following recommendations:

- *Revised Reporting Criteria for Charge Conference:* Annually churches report to the denomination metrics related to monies spent on local missions, constituents of local outreach, etc. We understand that these statistics are useful in charting denominational trends, yet these numbers often mean very little to local church leadership. Therefore, we recommend that local churches conduct a community survey regarding their local mission field. The community survey will be conducted every 5 years by church leadership. Leadership should determine the area to survey

and conduct randomized interviews. Results should be discussed, prayed over, and presented to charge conference. A sample interview template is included in appendix A. Interviews should collect the following:

- What is your (name) church known for in the community?
- If (name) church were to disappear, what would be lost?
- What is the greatest pressing need in our community?
- How would you like to see this church serve the community?
- *Regular Engagement with Relevant Study Material:* We encourage local churches to continually expand their knowledge and awareness of missional ministry topics. We encourage churches to:
 - Offer an annual study, sermon series, or small group to the church related to a specific aspect of missional ministry
 - Offer an annual reflection and discussion time for volunteers and leaders of missional ministries. Oftentimes we can become so focused on the ‘work’ that we seldom take time to process, learn, and give thanks.
- *Denominational Resources:* We encourage the denomination to have an annual focus on a specific missional ministry area. We encourage offering relevant teaching materials, highlighting a successful example of a related ministry in the denomination, and sharing testimonies of how God is moving through this ministry.

A Wesleyan History: When John Wesley began his ministry in the 1730’s, treatment of the poor in Great Britain was dour. England criminalized homelessness and debtors’ prisons had been instituted. As a student at Oxford, Wesley was convicted by the daily suffering he encountered as he walked down the streets. He felt that God had a purpose for those who had been alienated by society, and in many cases, the church. He was also convinced that Jesus was anointed to “proclaim good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18), so those who had declared faith in Christ should bear that same good news in the way they encounter the poor, the hungry, the prisoner, and the stranger, because in doing so, they would be encountering Christ himself (Matthew 25:31-46). Wesley would consistently visit day laborers and low income workers in the mines and fields, as well as the local prisons, where he would often preach and read Scripture with those imprisoned (many for economic reasons). He would also fast regularly, donating the money he would have spent on food to give to the poor, whom he would also visit. Wesley noted, “One great reason why the rich in general have so little sympathy for the poor is because they so seldom visit them. Hence it is that...one part of the world does not know what the other suffers” (The Sermons of John Wesley – Sermon 98, “On Visiting the Sick.”).

As leader of the growing Methodist movement, Wesley was also able to help develop more extensive ministries with the poor and strongly encouraged his followers to engage in this same overflowing love for God and neighbor through “acts of mercy.” In 1738, he purchased an old munitions factory, which he called the Foundry, to become the base of Methodism’s efforts on behalf of the destitute. Out of the Foundry, volunteers provided assistance with basic necessities such as food, clothing, housing, medical care, literacy classes, and even small business loans. Wesley also established homes for widows and orphans, as well as schools created specifically to educate poor children. As a result of this focus on living into these “means of grace,” the Methodist movement would go on to play a leading role in many of the important social reforms in 19th century England (abolishing the slave trade, establishing child labor laws, and instituting laws that provided greater protection for miners, factory workers, etc.).

Early Methodism’s roots in some of the poorest communities enabled people called Methodists to faithfully pursue personal and social holiness by serving and empowering those in need. By walking,

worshiping, and witnessing with neighbors who experience poverty, Methodists continue to minister to those who suffer by sharing the truth of God's promise of abundant life. As the church, we strive to not only meet basic human needs, but to repair broken systems, and demonstrate the radical love of the gospel and its transformative power to liberate and heal.

A Wesleyan Theology: A studious and Holy Spirit convicted Oxford student in 18th Century England, John Wesley, pouring over the scriptures in a revival that he in part helped stir across the Anglican world, would be led to the outsiders of his own religious context. His aims were to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ, the inward and outworking Kingdom of God, through the 'vile' means of open air preaching, small accountability groups, community oriented works of mercy, all with the goal of 'fleeing the wrath to come,' echoing John the Baptist's prophetic message to 'Repent!' and prepare for the 'one to come,' who for all who come in faith find Jesus the Christ and life itself – the light of the world. The Kingdom of God is near; "*Ye are saved.*" *It is not something at a distance: it is a present thing; a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, ye are now in possession of*" (John Wesley, "The Scriptural Way of Salvation" Sermon). In belief one is immediately Justified, Regenerated, Sanctified, and begins the work of repentance which hopes for Perfection – a hope Jesus placed before us – to be as the Father is perfect. Wesley left the centers of religious power, whose pulpits eschewed his Holy Spirit empowered mission, and he preached to miners, taught debtors to read the Bible, opened clinics for general health, educated children, cared for orphans, and even gave small loans. Wesley stood at the crossroads of Galilee, but in his own context, calling all who would listen to leave the darkness to the glory of the light.

In a treatise called "Thoughts upon Slavery" Wesley's social consciousness for the outsider gives all in the Wesleyan tradition a model for who is the object of the proclamation and evangelism of the peoples of the world – especially to reach out and embrace who the world sees as worthless or even non-human. It is there that we find Christ and his disciples:

"O thou GOD of love, thou who art loving to every man, and whose mercy is over all thy works: Thou who art the father of the spirits of all flesh, and who art rich in mercy unto all: *Thou who hast mingled of one blood, all the nations upon earth: Have compassion upon these outcasts of men*, who are trodden down as dung upon the earth! Arise and help these that have no helper, whose blood is spilt upon the ground like water! Are not these also the work of thine own hands, the purchase of thy Son's blood? Stir them up to cry unto thee in the land of their captivity; and let their complaint come up before thee; let it enter into thy ears! Make even those that lead them away captive to pity them, and turn their captivity as the rivers in the south. O burst thou all their chains in sunder; more especially the chains of their sins: Thou, Saviour of all, make them free, that they may be free indeed!"

(V.1; pg 56-57, italics added)

The hope of the God who promised Abraham's descendants would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth continually makes his purposes complete from generation to generation. As people of one book, we have countless examples of how the salvation of God naturally overflows as hospitality for all who hunger and thirst for righteousness with special emphasis on the foreigner and the alien among us. In 1 Kings 8, Solomon recognizes that the outsiders will look to the temple, echoing God's will he speaks: "When the foreigner looks to this house, do as they ask so Your name may be great! (paraphrased)" Solomon and his temple were foreshadowing the glory that would shine in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ – The way, the truth, and the light. Both the wealthy, the middle class, and the poor are equally in need of the good news; to the people of all cultures, tribes, nations, geographical regions,

education levels, and identities – all are impoverished spiritually without faith in Jesus Christ. To these ends we become more ‘vile’ and take to the streets proclaiming a name greater than our own – and we ought to do it with all passion and vigor as Wesley said to his ministers in his minutes, “You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most... to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance.” Like Christ, we do this with food, with healing, with hospitality, and all love; all the while proclaiming a Kingdom that is near which all who believe may enter.

Recommendations for Various Ministries: The remainder of this report offers a brief overview of suggested practices and models related to ministry with specific people groups. These reports include the topics of Addiction, Disability Ministries, Immigration and Refugees, Material Poverty, and Gospel Centered Community Development.

Addiction Ministries

Jesus introduced his ministry in Luke's gospel by proclaiming that God had sent him to "proclaim release to the captives" and "to let the oppressed go free."⁵ One of the modern forms of captivity and oppression is addiction. Countless men, women, and even children around the globe struggle with addiction to alcohol, tobacco, and other substances. Yet the good news of the gospel is that addiction can be overcome as part of God's ongoing work of salvation through Jesus Christ. The Lord offers hope of a new life and the church is called to embody this offer to a world in need.

For too long the church has outsourced its ministry of addiction recovery to outside professionals. We urge the church to reclaim its vital role alongside therapeutic and medical professionals.⁶ The church must retain its ministry to those struggling with addiction through the proclamation of hope through Jesus Christ, making available the rich and ancient resources of Christian discipleship, and providing authentic Christian community wherein lifelong transformation may thrive. This document seeks to outline key terms, best practices, and noteworthy models to assist local churches engaging in addiction recovery ministries.

Key Terms

- *Addiction*: Addiction broadly refers to unhealthy or compulsory behaviors regarding any number of substances, things, or activities.⁷ These can include but are not limited to pornography, technology, an addiction to power or fame, video games, sex, etc. Any aspect of God's good creation can be misused and distorted in ways that do not honor God. In this document we refer to addiction primarily in terms of the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, such as illegal substances and the abuse of pharmaceuticals.
- *Sin*: John Wesley had a two-fold understanding of the problem of sin that reflected theological traditions of both the Christian East and West. On the one hand, from the Western tradition, humankind struggles with the guilt incurred by transgressing God's word. In terms of addiction this could include transgressions such as the prohibition in Ephesians 5:18 not to be drunk on wine. On the other hand, from the Eastern tradition, sin causes a wound within us. We are sin sick and unable to act and behave as we ought. Paul's discussion in Romans 7 summarizes our sin sick condition:

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me."⁸

The human sin condition is two-fold: sin guilt and sin sickness. This condition affects all of humanity. We are sinners who therefore sin. For some, the sin condition manifests itself in the form of addiction.⁹

- *Salvation*: Wesley's understanding of salvation addresses the two-fold nature of sin. Through his atoning death, Christ offers forgiveness of transgression. We are told in 1 John, "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all

⁵ The Gospel of Luke, 4:18, NRSV

⁶ Elizabeth Raigan Vowell Miskelly, "Restoration: A Wesleyan Model of Recovery" (DMin thesis, Duke Divinity School, 2018), 4.

⁷ *American Heritage College Dictionary*, 4th ed., s.v. "addict" & "addiction."

⁸ Romans 7:15-17 New Revised Standard Version.

⁹ Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 73-74.

unrighteousness.”¹⁰ The church should emphasize the hope of Christ’s forgiveness for transgressions, broken promises, damaged relationships, and sinful behavior. The salvation of Jesus Christ is an offer to leave behind the guilt and shame of the past. It is an offer of a new beginning, whether for the first or the seventy-seventh time.

The second aspect of Wesleyan salvation is an emphasis on the healing of our sin wound. We require forgiveness, but we also need divine help in overcoming our brokenness. Wesley emphasized that God’s grace was transformative. All Christians are on a lifelong journey of being made and remade into Christ’s likeness.¹¹ This ongoing journey is referred to as sanctification. Paul refers to this ongoing transformative process:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.”¹²

The church would do well to emphasize the ongoing nature of healing and transformation in addiction recovery ministries.

- *Kingdom Time:* An additional aspect of our Wesleyan emphasis on salvation are its past, present, and future dimensions. On the cross Jesus exclaimed, “It is finished!”¹³ The most definitive act of salvation has been accomplished on our behalf. Despite our greatest struggles or lowest moments, we would do well to keep the faith and remember that our salvation is not based on what we accomplish, but on the atoning work of Christ.

In terms of present salvation, we affirm that Christ came that we may have life, and life abundantly. John Wesley was adamant that the ministry of the church should not exclude the present salvation of Christ setting captives free, changing hearts, and transforming lives. The present aspect of salvation means that God is at work setting us free from the things that steal, kill, and destroy. This is always a work in progress as we exist in the in-between time. We are between the cross and the return of Christ. Those among us struggling with addiction may take comfort knowing that even now, in the midst of our ongoing and daily struggle, God has not ceased working.

The future dimension of salvation refers to the final making of all things new. Those who are in Christ will experience new heavens and a new earth. In Revelation we are given a vision where “the former things will be no more.”¹⁴ No longer will humankind struggle to overcome sin or to resist temptation. Those who struggle with addiction, and all of us struggling against sin, look forward to that day when our faith shall be sight.

- *Means of Grace:* Those struggling to overcome addiction have been given a great tool through the means of grace. The means of grace are the “ordinary channels for conveying grace.”¹⁵ These practices, illuminated in scripture and verified through Christian tradition, are accessible

¹⁰ 1 John 1:9 New Revised Standard Version.

¹¹ Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 151-52.

¹² 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 New Revised Standard Version.

¹³ John 19:30 New Revised Standard Version.

¹⁴ Revelation 21:4 New Revised Standard Version.

¹⁵ Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 193.

to everyone. Examples include acts of piety such as prayer, fasting, journaling, personal and corporate worship, reception of the Lord's Supper, and Bible study. Other examples, such as works of mercy, include caring for the poor, feeding the hungry, ministering to prisoners, visiting the elderly, and advocating for God's justice. These ordinary practices are channels through which God's people are strengthened by God's grace. There is no guarantee that these practices will produce an encounter with God. However, as a rough rock under a stream is gradually made smooth, Christians who practice the means of grace recognize that over time God has been acting and transforming their lives.

- *Community:* One of the many means of grace is Christian community. Those struggling with addiction are encouraged to find community in both the larger gathering of a congregation and in the more private setting of a small group or accountability circle. Christian community provides a space for mutual accountability, confession and an arena to extend and receive forgiveness, and the proclamation of God's word.

Best Practices

Local churches can engage in a number of best practices to support those struggling with addiction. We offer up three best practices to consider:

1. *Church Culture:* For far too long the local church has outsourced all aspects of addiction recovery. It is true that counselors and therapists, doctors and medical teams, as well as detox and rehabilitation programs play a significant role in addiction recovery. However, sometimes these resources treat behaviors and neglect underlying issues, guilt, broken relationships, etc. As Christians we understand the greater issue is the human sin condition and the ongoing need for grace in Christian community. Churches must recover their identity as a hospital for the sick. Our congregations must develop a culture of walking alongside those struggling with addiction. This may take multiple forms:
 - a. Regular preaching and teaching on addiction recovery and the gospel
 - b. Develop a culture where church members and staff regularly communicate with and offer tangible signs of support to those connected with their church in rehabilitation programs. Do not simply refer someone to a program and discontinue communication.
 - c. Regularly lift up addiction recovery as a clear sign of God's grace
2. *Discipleship:* Those recovering from addiction would benefit greatly from intentional discipleship opportunities. Congregations would do well to offer regular small groups in the Wesleyan model that emphasize the sanctification journey. It is possible to offer discipleship groups specifically focused on addiction recovery, though not necessary. A genuine Wesleyan small group, class, or band should provide accountable Christian community where all Christians are comfortable to share their struggles
 - a. Create discipleship spaces which include spaces where vulnerability, confidentiality, accountability, and grace and shared values
 - b. Offer regular introductions to various spiritual disciplines and the means of grace
 - c. Tell the stories of God's ongoing transformative work in your congregation
3. *Resources:* Local churches are often places where people struggling with addiction go to seek help and guidance. It is helpful to have a number of resources on hand to offer support. These resources may include:
 - a. A list of local Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and other addiction support groups in the area. Some congregations will host groups for their local community.

- b. A list of local service providers for detox and rehabilitation. Be mindful that many programs have standing waitlists and require participants to complete blood works, immunizations, and provide other qualifying materials. Encourage your friend that though this process may take several steps, that you and the church will be available to offer support. Make sure to follow through on your offer.
- c. Maintain a reserve fund such as a Benevolence Account or Community Ministry Fund to subsidize expenses for an individual serious about entering a rehabilitation program.
- d. Be mindful of programs in your area that operate out of a Christian background. Many programs provide strong discipleship and accountability programs. It would serve you well to familiarize yourself with their theological background.
- e. Allow the individual to be in the driver's seat. In order to make a significant life change such as ending an addiction, that serious decision must be fully 'owned' by the individual. No one can do this for them. Do not be discouraged if the individual must make several attempts or tries at 'quitting' their addiction. Encourage them and offer steadfast support.

Effective Recovery Models

There are a number of effective recovery models, some of which can be replicated, others hosted in local congregations, and others that function as independent entities and are available in various regions.

- *Alcoholics Anonymous*: Alcoholics Anonymous is the standard bearer for ongoing support of those seeking to quit alcohol use. AA groups are based on a community model and mirror many components of early Methodist class meetings. AA groups are self-sufficient, can be hosted in local churches, and encourage participants to believe in a higher power. It should be noted, however, that AA groups are not distinctly Christian. It would be helpful to connect participants with an ongoing discipleship program.

Website: <https://www.aa.org/>

- *Miracle Hill Ministries*: Located in Upstate South Carolina, Miracle Hill Ministries is an example of a residential men's and women's recovery program. The program model allows participants to spend 27 weeks living on site, requires them to participate in several daily devotions, life skills, group and individual counseling, classroom instruction, and seminars. The program seeks to help participants live life free from the addictions of sin. This highly relational program provides participants transitional housing upon completion. There are a number of residential Christian rehabilitation programs like Miracle Hill Ministries. We encourage churches to establish an ongoing relationship with a particular program and find ways to support their ministries.

Website: <https://miraclehill.org/>

- *Celebrate Recovery*: This 12 step recovery program is designed for individuals suffering from hurt, brokenness, or addiction of any kind. It is a distinctly Christian program centered on scripture and adaptable to local church contexts. The Celebrate Recovery brand offers a variety of resources tailored for a number of demographics, including pastors, military, and children.

Website: <https://www.celebraterecovery.com/index.php>

- *12 Steps Worship Service*: Local congregations can offer a worship service structured around the 12 steps. Worship services designed in this format can create a powerful experience of

gathering as broken community, confessing sin publicly, receiving forgiveness, reception of the word, receiving of grace in the sacraments, and powerful praise. The emphasis on recovery transforms what may otherwise sound like a standard liturgy into a very powerful worship experience for those in recovery as well as those unfamiliar with this aspect of ministry. It would be helpful to have those in recovery to have significant leadership roles in a 12 steps service.

Website: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/paa-addiction_awareness_worship_service.pdf

- *Restoration: A Wesleyan Model of Recovery*: This Doctor of Ministry thesis provides an in-depth theological analysis of the nature of sin and offers a history of key moments in the Wesleyan movement. Our Wesleyan theological heritage provides opportunities for men and women to encounter the transformative power of God within Christian community. This document is recommended for further study by churches looking to create an effective atmosphere for support those struggling with addiction.

Website:

https://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10161/20188/Miskelly_divinity.duke_0066A_10093.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Disability Ministries

Definition

Differently abled has been historically defined as people with disabilities. A disability is a human condition in which daily tasks are independently difficult or unattainable due to physical, mental, emotional, social, and/or cognitive state(s). Differently abled (or person with disability using person first language) is a term used to diminish the negative connotations often attached to the word disability; however, differently abled is often used to be politically correct but lacks recognition of the life-changing influence a disability has on an individual's culture and life. The word *disability* focuses on what an individual cannot contribute to the community as opposed to what they offer as a member of Body of Christ. Due to a person's classification as differently abled within their context, the differences often obstruct, detain, or deny access to certain physical and social aspects of economic, educational, political, and even religious spheres of influence.

Key Principles and Theological Framework

From Psalm 139, all people are God's masterpieces, including people with disabilities. Social assumptions and discrimination have existed against the differently abled throughout history as flawed, broken, or of lesser importance. Due to their challenges, people with disabilities often face physical, economic, educational, employment, political, societal, and attitudinal barriers that push them to the margins of society. Within their numbers, many people with disability face poverty, underemployment, and under presentation as a direct result of being pushed to the margins of society based on what they cannot do. Some societies have incorrectly viewed people with disabling conditions as bearing the marks of their sinfulness, as illustrated in the John 9 interaction between Jesus and the blind man.

Ministry to and with people with disabilities encompasses an inclusion and advocacy focus. Mephibosheth, Legion, and the woman with the issue of blood are examples of the power and purpose of inclusion in all parts of society and ministry.¹⁶ Advocacy for people with disabilities can be seen in Mark 2:2-5 as some men physically helped a friend who could not get to Jesus by his own power, so they lowered him through the roof. As 1 Corinthians 12: 22-23 reminds us, the members of the Body of Christ that seem to be weaker are actually indispensable.

In his sermon, "Catholic Spirit," John Wesley noted: "though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these similar differences." This inclusive statement is an embodiment of our ministry to and with people who are identified as having a disability.

Additionally, hymnody speaks to our Wesleyan theology through writers whom God uses through their disability, including the following: Fanny Crosby (blind; To God be the Glory), Charlotte Elliot (bedridden: Just As I Am), Major Daniel Whittle (amputee, Have you any room for Jesus?), and Joseph Scriven (mental illness/depression; What a Friend we have in Jesus). We learn that in God's kingdom the blind can be the eyes, the amputees can be the hands and feet, even the deaf and mute can hear and proclaim God's sovereignty and grace.

¹⁶ 2 Samuel 4 & 9; Mark 5 & 7; Luke 8.

Best Practices

- *Engaging* – It is difficult to begin the process of including people with disabilities without first focusing on the personal relationship part of the dynamic. Jesus personally touched the mud to the blind man's eyes. The friends personally knew and wanted to help the person who couldn't get to Jesus by his own power. Fear often comes in the face of the unknown, so the church needs to seek ways to know the person and not just the label attached to the person. People with disabilities do not need pity but need to be treated with the same dignity as a person seen as able-bodied. Ways to make this happen come from a buddy system in the church, offering respite for parents of a special needs child, and offering a worship space and environment that is accessible to all.
- *Educating* – Education begins scripturally with the understanding that a disability is not the result of "the person or their parents' sin." Emphasis begins with the person who is made in the image of God and for whom God has a plan and a purpose. Since this is not a widely held view in the world, education helps people understand the multi-faced dynamics of life with a disabling condition or special need (spiritual, physical, emotional, socio-economic, educational, and political.) Teaching from our hymnody and scripture references where people with disabilities were "made whole" help make the Church whole from the perspective of all being welcome at the table.
- *Equipping*– To equip the church for ministry in this area, one must understand the power and purpose of inclusion in all parts of society and ministry. Advocacy efforts should be seen as an important part of ministry as it raises awareness and seeks to diminish assumptions. For example, one may assume a person in a wheelchair cannot help with the worship service; however, one can hold elements from a standing or sitting position. Helping the church see what a person can do over what they cannot do and encouraging the person with disability to try new things with the support of the church help the community to see hospitality and inclusion in action. Courses in American Sign Language or shedding light on a particular medical condition, opening the church for mental illness workshops, and inviting speakers to share their personal experience with God in the midst of special needs are examples of equipping. The work of *equipping* is for both the Church as well as for persons with a disability.
- *Empowering* – Empowering people with disabilities to have a place and a voice in the church is our ultimate goal. By the power of the Holy Spirit, one can do what others would consider impossible. Empowerment for people with disabilities makes way for the person God created to be a witness to the goodness and grace of God. Empowering may look like providing financial support so a blind or deaf person can obtain a service dog for independence, selecting people with disabilities onto church leadership committees, or close captioning videos so all can receive the word of God.

Short list of effective models

- *Lovers Lane UMC, Dallas, Tx*: An inclusive ministry for people with disabilities including multi-age deaf ministry and respite care to families with children with special needs.

- *Christ UMC in Bethel Park, PA and Grace UMC, Cape Coral, FL:* These ministries offer specific programming for persons with disabilities that not only serve a need but includes them fully in integrated settings.
- *Asbury Church, Madison, Ala:* This ministry offers classes for pre-school to early elementary, junior-senior high, and adults including immersive sensory room and adapted curriculum and activities for unique learning styles
- *Nampa College Church, Nampa, ID (Nazarene):* Inclusion pastor Jeff Hall helps the church include children with significant challenges in all aspects of the life of the church including his youngest daughter born with congenital CMV, which causes severe and lifelong disabilities.
- *A simple church study guide by Rev. Dr. Rebecca Collison:* Ministry and Disability: Living Life Together – uses scriptures and personal experiences helps churches who are at the starting stage of creating a church that ministers to and with people with disabilities. Contents are listed below in Appendix B.

Ministry with Immigrants, Refugees, & Displaced Peoples

A Missional Invitation: We are witnessing the largest scattering, or movement, of people and people groups in centuries. At the end of 2019, the United Nations reported 79.5 million forcibly displaced people and 272 million immigrants on the move in the world today. This modern-day *diaspora* invites the Church to expand its missional calling to intentionally reach out to, connect with, and be in ministry with immigrant and refugee communities on the move locally and globally. Ministry involving immigrants and refugees is an urgent missional mandate for the Church and should not be looked at through a political lens. Instead, it requires heeding the words expressed in Isaiah 62:10 (NKJV)

“Go through, Go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people; Build up, Build up the highway! Take out the stones, Lift up a banner for the peoples!”¹⁷

“Go through the gates” is a missional invitation to reach out beyond our cultural comfort-zones and stretch beyond the familiar in order to prepare ourselves to see, welcome, and be in ministry with those who are on the move from different lands and backgrounds. *“Take out the stones”* is an invitation to remove all barriers and imbedded prejudices that would impede our will or ability to see, welcome, and be in ministry with *diaspora* communities. *“Lift up a banner for the peoples”* invites us to advocate for their wellbeing, even as we show and share Jesus with them. Additionally, we recognize that the scattering of people and people groups in our time calls to mind the words of Acts 8:4 *“Now those who were scattered [because of persecution] went about preaching the word.”*

Christian refugees and immigrants have a lot to offer as they go about sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A partnership between the local church and refugees and immigrants has the potential of furthering Christ and His Kingdom. Additionally, non-Christian refugees and immigrants provide the church with unprecedented missional opportunities. Many refugees and immigrants come from geographical regions where freedom of religion is limited and the church has not formally existed for centuries. Many refugees and immigrants could hear the Gospel articulated clearly for the first time in their newly adopted countries.

Preamble: The belief of the Global Methodist Church is that we have a spiritual and moral burden to minister to all our brothers and sisters. This includes refugees and immigrants. Dr. William Abraham has said that the greatest impact of this new global Wesleyan movement will be among the small Methodist and Wesleyan bodies or congregations of the world. This is likely because these churches daily confront the realities of migrating people. While it is a fundamental expression of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, namely, the love for our neighbors, it is incumbent upon us to define why and how we will engage them with a unified intent.

Introduction: Immigration is not new to the human experience. People have been on the move, for one reason or another, for centuries. In Scripture we see that God is a God who has always been on the move. Migration at its core means movement, and we can see God’s movement woven throughout the Bible. Additionally, God’s very movement compels people to be on the move. Biblical movement is not solely relegated to physical movement (i.e. Hebrew exodus), but also spiritual movement (i.e. the Church in the book of Acts). Shortly into the Biblical story in Genesis, we see that Adam and Eve “migrated” out of the Garden of Eden, Noah and his family migrated to safety on the ark, and Abraham and Sarah were told to leave their homeland and migrate to another place. Perhaps the greatest migration story of the Old Testament was God’s people, a nomadic people, in an ongoing migration that lasted several generations. This migration would ultimately lead them to the Promised Land.

¹⁷ Isaiah 62:10 New King James Version.

People migrating is nothing new. In fact, we make a theological case that the greatest migration moment took place when God “left” heaven and migrated to this earth through Jesus in order to soothe the cries of a hurting and lost humanity. Jesus became an “immigrant” among us to experience our humanity and offer us help in our greatest time of need. Through this, Jesus offered the world salvation and deliverance from the power of sin. God moved so that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. Today, we are called to love and move that others might have life more abundantly. The United States is not the only country dealing with how immigration impacts society. Throughout the centuries, Europe, Asia, Africa, and beyond have experienced the migration phenomenon in a widespread fashion.

Key Terms:

- An *immigrant* is defined as a foreigner who has entered a country for the purpose of temporary or permanent residence, notwithstanding the reasons or causes.
- A *refugee* can be understood as a person who has fled from their country due to persecution, war, famine, or other forms of danger. (Note: Most US refugees come into the country legally).
- An *externally displaced* person is one who has been forced from their home temporarily, crossed an international border but anticipates returning to their home country. Externally displaced persons could also be categorized as refugees under certain conditions.
- An *internally displaced* person is one who has been forced from her home city or state but has not crossed the border to find safety. Their motivation for the movement can have multiple causes such as persecution, civil war, natural disaster or famine.
- An *illegal immigrant* refers to the migration of people into a country in violation of the immigration laws of that country, or the continued residence of people without legal right to live in that country. A more humanizing term is *undocumented immigrant*. In the eyes of God no one is deemed ‘illegal.’
- A *stranger* is a person who you do not know or one who is not known that shows up in a particular place or community. Leviticus 19:33-34 reminds us that “when a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”
- A *neighbor* is a person living near or next door to the speaker or person referred to. In the New Testament Jesus extends the meaning of a neighbor to include the stranger.

Biblical/Theological Foundation: The theme of immigration and the care for the stranger and displaced peoples runs throughout both the Old and New Testaments. The people of Israel and the early church often found themselves as refugees in different foreign countries for many reasons. The commandments of Jesus of Nazareth are the force behind the care for the stranger and displaced. The greatest commandments are: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus also adds, “On these two commandments hang all of the law and the prophets.”¹⁸ In other words, the relationship between love of God and love of neighbor/stranger is inseparable. 1 John makes a definitive case for this symbiotic union when he says that if we say we love God but hate our brother, we are liars.¹⁹ If we are to be

¹⁸ Matthew 22:36-40

¹⁹ 1 John 4:20

Christians of integrity, it is incumbent upon us to seek to love God genuinely and to intentionally seek to love and minister to our neighbors.

Therefore, we have a *responsibility to the stranger*. The church is called to look at the immigrant as a stranger and treat them as the Bible calls us to do. Peter talks about being hospitable to strangers.²⁰ Our response to immigrants should be biblically focused, not political.

Vulnerability: Whenever we go to a new place, or a new nation, we find ourselves in a potentially vulnerable state because of the cultural, lingual, and emotional disconnects. Immigrants, refugees, and displaced peoples find themselves in a similarly vulnerable place. The church is called to show hospitality to them, remembering that our citizenship is not of this world.

Principles to guide our work with immigrants, refugees and those displaced:

- *Unity Through the Imago Dei:* We believe that everyone, including immigrants, is made in the image of God; therefore, we should treat all with dignity and respect. This means our ministry to immigrants extends equally to non-Christians and opposing religious views with hope that they come to experience the saving power of Christ.
- *Unity by Redemption and Diversity in Operation:* Many immigrants, refugees and displaced people we encounter are already Christians and therefore are our brothers and sisters in Christ. These believers bring with them years of experience. The danger is often to invite immigrants to join us and worship like us, but our stylistic preferences may be foreign to them. For effectiveness of ministry among immigrants, churches are encouraged to create space for them to maintain their uniqueness in worship style, thereby strengthening the diversity in our congregations.
- *Recognizing Giftedness:* Recognize the faithfulness, strengths and passion immigrant Christians bring with them and how that can positively impact our churches if we receive their ministry. Approach immigrants from the perspective of learners, recognizing that there is much to learn from those God is bringing to us.
- *Relationships:* A relationship begins with meeting someone, knowing that person's name, and calling them by that name. Nathanael was astonished that Jesus had seen him and knew his name before they had even met.²¹ There is power in calling someone by name. Whether at church, at work, or the local grocery store, make a point of asking someone their name, particularly someone from a different country, and see where God takes things from there.
- *Genuine Partnership:* It has been said that without relationship, there is no partnership. It is imperative to get to know and bring immigrants to the table and have genuine conversations with them. Value their input and let them be involved in the decision-making process. This will build trust, a greater commitment, and a stronger partnership. Partnerships also give us opportunities for mutual learning, if we are willing to listen and ask questions.
- *Cultural Intelligence:* Learn the culture and language of immigrants and how each culture communicates. For example, "Hot-climate cultures [primarily] are more *"relationship-based"*. Examples include most Latin American countries and parts of Africa. Cold-climate cultures are

²⁰ 1 Peter 4:9

²¹ John 1:48

oftentimes more “*task-oriented*”. Examples include the northern United States, Western Europe, and Israel.”

- *Theology of Power in the Global South*: Many immigrants that come to the United States or Europe are coming from the global south. Understanding their theology of power and value for harmony is very significant to giving them a voice. In some of these cultures, people see those in leadership as God’s representatives; therefore, as a leader, to get their opinion on a subject, we might need to encourage them to share their viewpoint and not take the initial response as their genuine feedback on a subject.
- *Turnover Timeline for Immigrant Ministry*: Due to the transient nature of immigrants, and the economic realities of those who might be resident, we cannot place the same timeline for numeric and financial turnover as we do for a regular church plant. Church planting among immigrants should be treated as a mission field in which people must invest. Immigrant ministry requires a time to build relationships, and trust to allow the ministry to grow organically.
- *Salary Equality*: Pastors who are hired to serve immigrant communities should be paid equal salary, like any other pastors. They should be treated with dignity, like any other clergy.
- *Value the Diversity Among Immigrants*: The beauty of the Church throughout the ages is its diversity of people groups and cultures. In John 17, Jesus prays for our unity as witnesses to a watching world. The Church’s work among immigrants is our foretaste of eternity as indicated in Revelation 7:9, “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hand.” Can you imagine what that will be like?
- *Wesleyan Christianity as Primitive*: Many immigrants come to the United States and Europe with strong faith and can be natural leaders in their community. We can also broaden our ecclesiastical reach and appreciation for the different kinds of worship that these cultures bring to us. Pastors desiring to work with immigrant communities should be encouraged to broaden their ecclesiastical competence and be consciously aware of the gifts each person brings. Inviting immigrant pastors to speak in our congregation and to share their experiences will foster relationships that are transformational and help to broaden the understanding of our congregations.

Practical Steps to Starting Immigrant Ministry: Those with a Wesleyan theology believe that “the world is our parish.” In recent generations, that “world” has come to our doorsteps. The movement of immigrants, the supplanting of refugees, and the displacement of peoples for a variety of reasons across the globe presents an opportunity to serve outside our own doorsteps rather than requiring our own movement to other places.

At the birth of the Church, recorded in Acts, God orchestrated a gathering of world representatives to a place in which He worked through the disciples so that everyone could hear the Gospel in their own language. This should be our response to God’s gathering of peoples arriving in places unknown to them. How will they hear the Gospel so that they can understand?

We offer the following as practical steps to starting a ministry to and with immigrants, refugees, and displaced peoples:

- *Begin with an Inventory of Existing Ministries in your Area.* The simplest way to get started is to join a ministry that has already been established. Compile a list to include the name and contact info, services offered, and demographics served. Share the list in your congregation and invite prayer.
- *Identify Members Who May Already be Involved.* The most effective ministry of the church is one which is initiated and led by laity. If there are members who are engaged, find out who serves as the point person. Help them get the word out and invite others to join. If possible, lead by example as you join in the ministry.
- *Find the Gatekeepers of the Community:* Many immigrants come with a traditional faith and the gatekeepers, though not ordained clergy, generally serve as the ones who harness that faith and strength. The clergy *may* in some immigrant communities have a more authoritative standing to open dialogue, but the goal is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Therefore, a best practice would be to use the Biblical pattern of ministry teams that go in pairs or threes.
- *Seek to Understand:* An understanding of an immigrant's homeland, culture, and practices, and finding ways to work with what is familiar can make guests feel appreciated. Ask for assistance in learning. Take the attitude of a servant who wants to be taught rather than one who comes only to teach.
- *Listen:* The greatest impediment to effective ministry with our global neighbors will be ourselves, in whatever locale we serve. The assumption that we "know" what people need cannot be the place to begin. It may go without saying that the ministry matrix of Matthew 25 is always a good place to begin. We must listen to those who have moved into the neighborhood. Our own values are not necessarily shared values, and, even if they are shared, how those values are lived out could be very different. Listening means we take on ourselves a 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14 mindset. Paul's admonition in both chapters is to be sure we don't miss fellowship with others just because we aren't in agreement on "disputable matters." In serving immigrant populations in our neighborhoods we do not compromise Biblical mandates or values, but in all other things we can adjust for the sake of the Gospel.
- *Respect Privacy:* Recognize that many immigrants are very sensitive about their personal lives. There are some topics and themes that are not helpful in establishing a relationship—finances, for instance. Be willing to get into the messiness of their lives if they open up to you. Ensuring you say *thank you* at every opportunity will cultivate a foundation of graciousness and respect.
- *Find Common Ground:* With a missionary mindset, seek those things that create common ground. Sports, for instance, is often a universal language, especially European football or American soccer. The importance of family, parenting, and respect for elders are often themes that can establish communion.
- *Commit to the Process:* This is a process, and not a one-time event. Be committed long-term so that those you serve can see and experience you returning again and again to do the most mundane of things. The salvation of others is the work of God through us; it is not our work. By showing up again and again, you demonstrate the heart of God who pursues us and loves us no matter what.

- *Be an Advocate:* Be an advocate for the immigrant community you serve. Understand what cultural barriers exist, and what systemic processes are difficult to traverse. This can be a wide place of common ground. Go with them to meetings and appointments, and establish an “immigrant cabinet” of expertise in what is needed. Some ideas might include: immigration law, housing, tax law, auto mechanic, childcare, medical professionals, construction, social workers. Consider any aspect of life that may be helpful to navigating the unknown and unfamiliar that could be overlooked by someone embedded in the culture for their whole lives.
- *Equip the Church to Share our Faith with Immigrants:* Our clergy and members should be equipped with basic skills to know how to reach immigrants from Christian backgrounds, and also those from non-Christian backgrounds. Equip the church to reach Muslims, Hindus, atheists, and others. Teach the church how to welcome and disciple others.
- *Be Invitational:* If you are a part of a group, regardless of size, invite them to join you. As these Wesleyan groups become more popular and integral to the local church, it would be a small step to incorporate outreach into the community with a special focus on the immigrant population as part of their accountability and participation. Some of these groups already have a community outreach component to them, but adding one should not be difficult.

Effective Models for Serving Immigrants: There is good news as your church begins to explore how it will build relationships with immigrants in your local community. Other churches and ministries have paved the way with effective models already in place and would love to partner with you and your members. Here are a few examples:

- *World Relief* - World Relief empowers the local church to walk alongside refugees and immigrants through refugee resettlement, employment services, and English language training. You can request a speaker to come to your church or community to both inform and explain the possibilities in your area. <https://worldrelief.org/request-a-speaker/>
- *Connect Language Training* - Connect Language Center offers courses designed to meet the needs of newcomers from all backgrounds living and working in Memphis. Pulling from World Relief's national ESL program expertise, each class is taught by certified ESL instructors. Students can create their own schedule of courses depending on what and how they want to study. Volunteers are needed to provide transportation and to practice conversational English through the Roadrunners and Cafe English programs. Connect Language Center offers an ESL program for older immigrants connecting them with local residents of area retirement homes to practice their English skills. <https://worldreliefmemphis.org/english-language-training>
- *Trauma Healing - American Bible Society* - In the aftermath of the world's greatest tragedies—from genocide and natural disasters to domestic abuse—people endure wounds of the soul and spirit. Without intervention, they can become trapped in cycles of poverty and violence. One by one, American Bible Society works to use the beautiful restoration narrative in the Gospel to heal the wounds of the heart.. <https://ministry.americanbible.org/mission-trauma-healing>
- *Sports - Memphis Cup of Nations / Country Champions* - The theme for the Memphis Cup of Nations is to seize the universal passion for sport, connect the nations, and build community. Sixteen teams representing 16 different nations, will compete in a day-long soccer tournament

to determine the best in Memphis to celebrate, recognize and honor an often-overlooked part of the community.

- *Invite* - Many immigrants and refugees have been in the US for years and yet are never invited to share a meal with an American family. This is probably the simplest and best way to get started. Invite them and/or their family into your home for a meal or invite a leader to share breakfast at a local restaurant. Then listen and ask questions like you would with anyone else. One leader, who was invited to breakfast, shared that in his ten years in our country this was only the second time someone had invited him to share a meal and just listen to his story and needs. It is ok to keep it simple.

Ministry with the Materially Poor

Definition: Material Poverty is a term used for individuals lacking material goods and services to meet basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. While the definition might be a simple one, it is critically important to acknowledge that the underlying, fundamental problem is not a lack of material goods and services. The lack of material goods is merely the presenting symptom of the deeper emotional, spiritual, psychological and physical brokenness of many people living in material poverty.

Key Principles and Theological Framework

Then the King will say to those on his right,
'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance,
the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.
For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink
was a stranger and you invited me in,
I needed clothes and you clothed me,
I was sick and you looked after me,
I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

Then the righteous will answer him,
'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,
or thirsty and give you something to drink?
When did we see you a stranger and invite you in,
or needing clothes and clothe you?
When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you,
whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine,
you did for me.'²²

Jesus said that whenever we minister to the hungry, the homeless, the sick and the prisoner – in other words, those in material poverty – then we make a very real connection with Him. In John 20:21, Jesus prepares His disciples for the nature of their mission when He says, "As the Father has sent Me, so I send you." Incarnational mission is at the heart of Jesus' identity and purpose; as His followers, we too must embrace the same as our calling. This calls us to more than acts of kindness on behalf of the poor. Instead, we are called to engage with and walk alongside those who are experiencing material poverty. Forming partnerships between the powerful (the haves) and the powerless (the have nots) to overcome the culture of this broken world with the culture of the kingdom of God is at the heart of incarnational mission. Andy Crouch, in *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*, explains the need for these partnerships best: "God is for the poor – the oppressed, the widow and the orphan – and He is for humanity in our collective poverty, our ultimate powerlessness in the face of sin and death. But He makes known His redemptive purposes for us through both the powerless and the powerful, using both to accomplish His purpose. When God acts in culture, He uses both the powerful and the powerless

²² Matt. 25:34-40 New International Version.

alongside one another rather than using one against the other. To mobilize the powerless against the powerful would be revolution; to mobilize the powerful against the powerless would simply confirm “the way of the world”. But to bring them into partnership is the true sign of God’s paradoxical and graceful intervention into the human story. I believe this pattern – God working with the poor and the rich, the powerless and the powerful – serves as a kind of template for seeking out what God might be doing now in our human culture.”²³

First, it is understood that often the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter and clothing must be met before being able to effectively invite the materially poor into deeper empowering partnership. When life is in peril, the Church is called to respond quickly and generously with “relief,” resources needed to sustain life. Examples of appropriate situations in which to offer “relief” are times of natural disaster (eg. fire, earthquake) or sudden catastrophic economic crisis.

However, often the materially poor are caught in patterns of behavior or caught in systems that create frequent crisis, but are not, in fact, life peril. Take for example, a person facing an electric cut-off in America. While to a middle-class person, this seems like a “crisis” and an appropriate time to offer financial relief, it is likely not. Instead, the person needs encouragement and support to define why they find themselves in an electric cut-off situation (which is often a regular occurrence) and to define for themselves how they might solve that problem long-term. This is not to say that utility relief should never be offered, but instead to say that situations need discernment and prayer and that offering material relief should not be the standard and only response by the church.

The challenge for the church is to recognize when “relief” efforts to sustain life are appropriate and when “development” efforts to create that deeper partnership with the materially poor are appropriate. Developmental efforts are much more difficult, but ultimately more successful than ministry only through “relief”.

From “Charity De-tox” by Robert Lupton

“Feed a person once, it elicits appreciation
Feed him twice, it creates anticipation
Feed him three times, it creates expectation
Feed him four times, it becomes an entitlement
Feed him five times, it produces dependency”²⁴

It is critically important that the church avoid becoming just another social service and instead enter into truly redemptive work with Jesus.

²³ Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 209.

²⁴ Robert Lupton, *Charity Detox* (New York, NY: Harpercollins Publishers, 2015), 114.

Our key principles for addressing the needs of those living in material poverty are based on the book *When Helping Hurts*, by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. The book's principle is alleviating poverty by restoring broken relationships caused by the entrance of sin into the world. Those fundamental broken relationships are (1) between a person and God, (2) themselves (how a person views themselves), (3) others (family, neighborhood, community), and (4) creation (the ability to use and steward resources to provide for one's needs).

All people, both those in material poverty and those with relative material security, suffer from these same four broken relationships. However, those in material poverty will especially struggle at a much deeper level with how they view themselves and their relationship with creation. People living in material security tend to suffer from pride which results in an independence from God and a loss of community relationships. When we address material poverty only by supplying resources, then we do harm to both the materially poor and the materially secure. We exacerbate the feeling of shame and inferiority in the materially poor and we increase the pride of the materially secure. Therefore, it is critical to find a way to "help" that does not ultimately "hurt."

In ministry addressing material poverty, we begin with the premise that the goal is the restoration of the four broken relationships and for a person to become an image bearer of Christ in their family and community. We also believe that we, the church, cannot restore those broken relationships for neither ourselves nor for the materially poor. Jesus is the restorer of those four broken relationships for all people. However, our ministry is one of partnership with Jesus:

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ's ambassadors²⁵

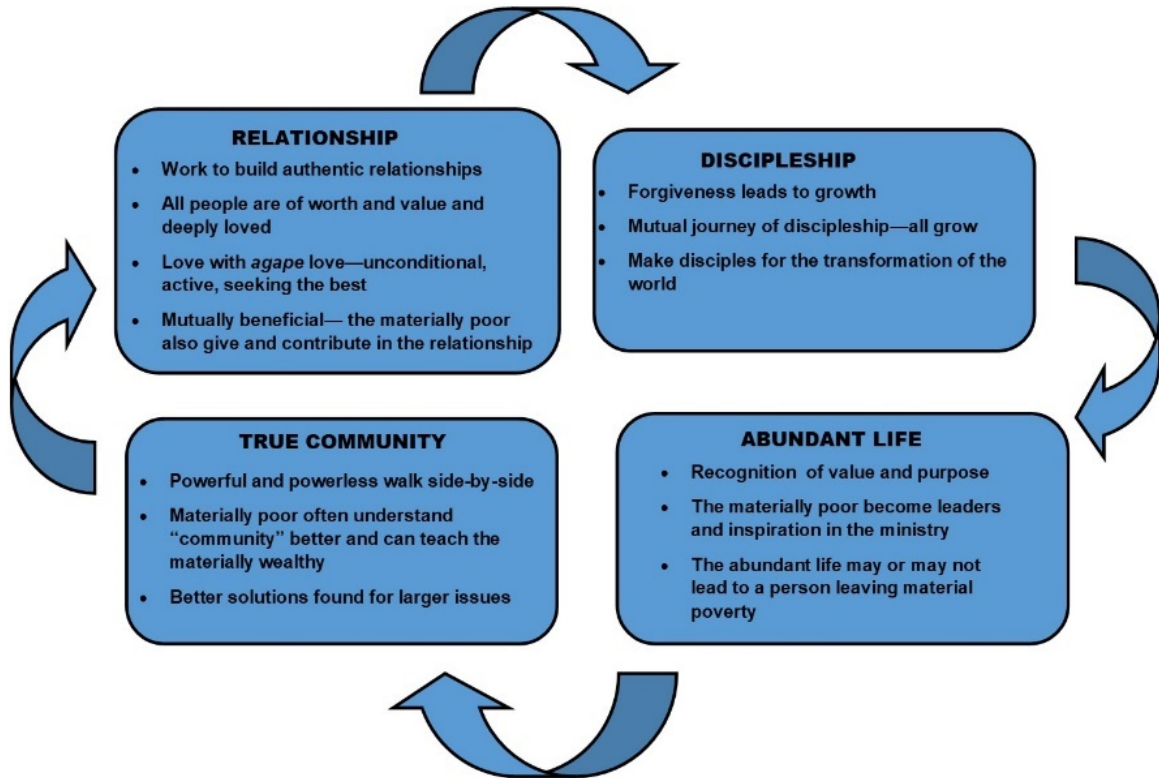
Our role is to proclaim the good news and show the good news. We must recognize how Jesus is already working in the lives of individuals and communities caught in material poverty and partner in His work through mutually beneficial relationships and effective empowering/developmental partnership with the materially poor.

With those core principles in mind, we are defining a discipleship journey between the materially rich and the materially poor. Ideally this journey occurs in a church that welcomes and values people of all economic statuses.

Key Steps & Principles: There are four key steps/principles that work in a circular journey.

²⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 New International Version.

MINISTRY JOURNEY WITH THE MATERIALLY POOR



1. Relationships

*So God created mankind in his own image
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.²⁶*

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord,
plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.²⁷*

These two passages set a framework for the inherent worth of all people in God’s eyes. All people are created in God’s image and are loved deeply by God. All people are created to be image bearers of Christ. Therefore, all people should be deeply loved also by the church and its people. That love is *agape* in the Greek, a love that is unconditional, active, and strives for the best for the recipient of that love. All people are also created for purpose and are gifted by God to live out that purpose.

²⁶ Genesis 1:27 New International Version.

²⁷ Jeremiah 29:11 New International Version.

To live out these Scriptures, we first develop authentic relationships; that is foundational for effective ministry. Relationships are built on an understanding of the inherent worth and value of all people. It is through authentic relationships that we build trust. When trust is built, healing can begin.

It is also important to establish relationships that are mutually beneficial, permitting the materially poor to contribute value in the relationship. Relationships are especially important in communities caught in generational poverty and the middle-class and wealthy can learn much about authentic relationship and the concept of community from the materially poor.

God's plan is for all to have hope and a future in deep relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. Therefore, our ministry should encourage hope and deep relationship with Jesus that will lead to a future that is filled with wholeness in Jesus for both those in material poverty and those serving in the church. Relationships then lead to inviting others into God's plan of making disciples.

2. Discipleship

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them.

3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."²⁸

As relationships are built, people are invited into the process of becoming disciples. Our ministry should not only "do no harm" but should encourage all people to recognize their brokenness, their need for Jesus, and the value of walking together in community towards wholeness in Christ. Our ministry should encourage that movement towards Christ-likeness in both the people in material poverty and in those serving in the church.

The story of the paralytic gives us a glimpse of four friends who had obviously built relationships between them and the paralytic. Can you imagine going to such lengths for a friend? As we go about our task of making disciples, we grow in our own spiritual journeys as disciples and begin to experience the abundant life promised by Jesus. "When Jesus saw their faith, the faith of those four friends, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Forgiveness is essential to this new faith community in this scripture and it is central to their healing.

²⁸ Mark 2:1-5 New International Version.

3. Abundant Life

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.²⁹

In abundant life, a person recognizes how deeply they are loved by God, recognizes their unique purpose and is living out that calling from God. Our journey grows and strengthens by serving and being served. All become more effective image bearers of Christ.

For the materially poor, it may or may not mean that the person leaves material poverty. People living on fixed income or with inadequate education to get a skilled job will likely continue to live under the poverty “line.” Yet again, wealth and the presence of resources is not the real problem of poverty; it is the psychological, emotional, spiritual, and physical brokenness that often accompanies material poverty. The best models of poverty alleviation will lead to the materially poor themselves becoming the leaders and inspiration in their community, bringing yet more people into a process of healing and abundant life.

As we continue to live into this abundant life that Jesus came to give us, we journey on around the circle of discipleship towards true community, walking side-by-side.

4. True Community

*Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ,
if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit,
if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete
by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do
nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.
Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,
In your relationships with one another,
have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.³⁰*

An outcome of using a developmental, Christ-centered model of poverty alleviation is that the materially poor and materially rich can enter into true community with each other. The materially poor often have a better inherent concept of “community” than the middle and upper classes. As relationships are built, discipleship grows and abundant life is being lived, we can find the beauty and power of the materially poor and wealthy walking side-by-side in true community. In fact, when people of all economic classes work together on larger societal issues, often better solutions are found. The poor understand best the real problem and best outcome, the middle class bring the ability to organize and manage the steps in the solution and the wealthy bring social connections to make larger transformational solutions possible.

²⁹ John 10:10 New International Version.

³⁰ Philippians 2:1-7 New International Version.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe
at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.
All the believers were together and had everything in common.
They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.
Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.
They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising
God and enjoying the favor of all the people.
And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.³¹*

*All the believers were one in heart and mind.
No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own,
but they shared everything they had.³²*

These verses set a framework for generosity in all. It is helpful in ministry to be willing to be a recipient, allowing those in material poverty to also be generous and share their blessings with the church.

When we come full circle, we have both sides of the margin walking side-by-side, serving and being served. There are healthy boundaries held by all. We then are sent out to build relationships bringing more disciples and continuing the circle of discipleship.

Other Principles: Asset-based Community Development (ABCD).

Asset-based community development is an approach to defining and recognizing the assets and skills that God has already placed in a community of material poverty. Its positive approach towards community members also sets a more helpful beginning in ministry. In more traditional poverty ministry, churches tend to approach communities in a "problem-oriented" manner, with questions which have an underlying assumption of "what's wrong with you?" This creates a beginning based on deficiency and increases the feelings of shame and inadequacy that plague those in material poverty. In ABCD, the church approaches members of a community with questions like: "What are you good at doing?" "What skills do you have?" "What skills do you see in your neighbor?" "How have you seen God at work in your community?" ABCD then builds on the recognition of assets already present in the members of the community and encourages them to utilize those assets for the continuing betterment of their family and community.

Training in ABCD questions and approach is helpful when beginning to go deeper into a community. Chapter 5 of *When Helping Hurts* describes the ABCD process.

Best Practices: We recommend the following initial steps when formulating an improved approach to material poverty for your church.

³¹ Acts 2:42-47 New International Version.

³² Acts 4:32 New International Version.

1. *Studying Relevant Materials:* Have key leadership in the church and missions team(s) study together the book “When Helping Hurts” by Corbett/Fikkert. This is the most comprehensive and well organized, step-by-step resource for transforming your poverty alleviation efforts. There is a companion small group study called “When Helping Hurts – The Small Group Experience”, but don’t just use the small group study. The book is needed for missions and pastoral leadership, although the small group study might be good for the general congregation. Other excellent resources by Fikkert are “Helping Without Hurting in Church Benevolence,” and “Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Mission Trips” small group study. Other helpful books are “Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life,” “Toxic Charity” and “Charity De-tox” by Robert Lupton. Lupton’s books are especially effective for “heart” change and also lay out the concept of ministry by becoming actual neighbors, moving into areas of poverty.
2. *Ministry Inventory:* After using the above resources to help transform your view of effective poverty alleviation, do an inventory of your current poverty ministries including what they do, who is reached through the ministry, who is volunteering in the ministry, and what benefits are being realized by both the recipients and the volunteers.
3. *Evaluate Ministry:* Categorize your ministries as to those that you definitely believe God is leading you to keep, those that you believe God is calling you to reform, and those that God is leading you to end. Ending ministry should be done in an honoring way allowing for transition and grieving.
4. *Funding Outside Ministries:* If your church believes their call is to fund other ministries, look for those to support that utilize shared values and principles for responsible poverty ministry. If financial generosity is part of your church’s calling, consider additional ways to engage in hands-on ministry.
5. *Existing Partnerships:* Identify where the Holy Spirit is already working in your church and community to transform your ministries. Has a relationship formed with a local Section 8 housing manager or owner? Is there a local school or apartment complex or mobile home park near to the church? Where is the heart of your volunteers? Is it with children, adults, those who are homeless, or the incarcerated? Find logical connection points in your community that match with your discernment of God’s call for your church.
6. *Training:* Take time to train your volunteers and congregation. Effective resources include “Bridges Out of Poverty – Day 1 Training” and “When Helping Hurts – the small Group Experience.” These trainings can help participants understand the difference in world views between poor, middle-class and wealthy individuals and begin to appreciate both the value and challenges in those different world views.
7. *Reduce or Eliminate Unhealthy Giving:* Work towards having all charity involve an exchange, where the receiver is also “paying” for the resources they are receiving in some way. The exchange does not need to be equal. It’s important that we give people the dignity and joy of “paying” for something themselves. This reduces the sense of shame associated with being a recipient of charity. Charge a small fee or allow the person to exchange valuable labor for what the person is receiving so that they can feel that they paid for it. A clothing giveaway can become a mini-thrift store. A food pantry might become a food co-op.

8. *Transition to Relational:* Begin taking steps to make the ministries you are starting, retaining, or reforming more relational. For example, if you have a food pantry, set up a table for coffee and conversation when people come to get food. Begin cookouts or social get togethers in the community that God is calling you to serve. Begin getting to know the people coming in the same way you might get to know a new neighbor or new church member. Be friendly, honoring, respectful, open, honest, and transparent. Remember that building relationships takes time. People in material poverty are used to church people giving them handouts and then disappearing. It will take time for people to believe that you are there for the long-term and that you genuinely want to know them and respect them as people.
9. *Deeper Conversations:* As you begin to get to know people, enter into deeper conversations. Begin entering into the discipleship journey towards abundant life and true community.
10. *Continual Evaluation:* Evaluate your ministries periodically and try to keep going deeper towards developmental, empowering ministry. It is especially important to bring the materially poor into leadership in the ministry and to really listen to them. Remember that they understand the real problems and best solutions likely better than a middle-class church volunteer.

Short List of Effective Models:

1. *Chalmers Center:* This ministry is run by Brian Fikkert (“When Helping Hurts”) and has resources to equip the church to live out effective ministry with the materially poor. An especially effective ministry from Chalmers Center is “Faith and Finances,” a highly-relational ministry for helping the materially poor more effectively manage their resources. Facilitators are trained by Chalmers Center. Their website is: <https://chalmers.org/>
2. *Grace Kids Church:* A mission in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Louisville, Kentucky, that addresses the material needs of children in the area while also intentionally discipling these children in Christian faith and practice. This mission could serve as a template for inner city renewal across the entire United States. You can see video of this mission on their website: gracekidschurch.com.
3. *Hope Springs Church:* This United Methodist congregation in Lexington, Kentucky, embraces the Celebrate Recovery program as its core missional identity. In connection with CR, the church operates two faith-based sober living houses – Redemption House for women & Lansdowne House for men – that provide a safe space and intentional processes for those coming out of treatment or jail to get established with employment, residency, and other needs while connecting with a church family. Their website is: <https://www.hopespringslex.com/>
4. *Henderson Settlement:* A Methodist ministry in Appalachia that has been reforming their ministry model in accordance with “When Helping Hurts.” Short-term mission teams work alongside home owners in repairing local homes. Their website is: <https://www.hendersonsettlement.com/>
5. *410 Bridge:* An international mission partnership ministry that is run by the principles of When Helping Hurts. All leadership in other countries is local. American churches are paired for 5-7

years with a village in another country and provide capital and encouragement while the village leadership envisions and manages transformation in that village. Short-term mission trip leaders are trained by 410 Bridge in proper ministry before leading a trip. Their website is: <https://410bridge.org/>

6. *Fairhaven Church*: This church has a ministry called ACTS that serves as an ally and mentorship ministry to help people in poverty reimagine and transform their own life based on Bridges Out of Poverty and When Helping Hurts principles. There are occasional training opportunities at this church. Their website is: <https://fairhaven.church/>
7. *Focused Community Strategies*: Founded by Robert Lupton, this ministry promotes “neighboring” and comprehensive neighborhood development. They offer several different on-going training opportunities for church leaders. Their website is: <https://www.fcsministries.org/>
8. *City Gospel Mission “Whiz Kids”*: a one-to-one after-school reading ministry for at-risk kids. Churches sponsor a Whiz Kid site at a local school. Adults or senior high tutors are paired for the whole year with the same elementary-age child and read with them for ½ hour after school each week. There is nearly 100% improvement towards reading grade level for the kids and Whiz Kids sites also have spiritual development at the beginning of the Whiz Kid time. School systems throughout Cincinnati have embraced the program even with its overt faith emphasis because of its success. The adults have an option to mentor the child through high school if they connect strongly. Their website is: <https://www.citygospelmission.org/about-us/our-services/whiz-kids/>

Gospel Centered Community Development

Our Ministry with Margins Gospel-Centered Community Development (GCCD) team was charged to develop a simple and scalable guide to support this powerful Kingdom movement. We were blessed with significant experience that included intentional neighborhood residents, a pastor of marginalized communities, a founder of the Christian Community Development movement, founders of GCCD organizations, hands-on practitioners, and renowned authors of key works that have illuminated the path for the Church. Like John Wesley's "quadrilateral" our report leans heavily on our Holy Spirit-led experiences that were launched from biblical principles and mandates.

Christ-centered relationships, not programs: One risk of this report would be for emerging GCCD practitioners to attempt to simply copy program examples shared here. The core values are relational, striving to build hope and dignity through the Gospel applied to the needs of marginalized in love. This work's journey must be done together in a long-term trusted exchange that empowers and reconciles with the marginalized within their context.

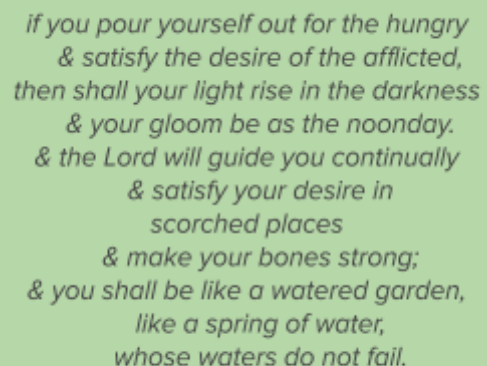
Count the Cost of Time, Resources, & Yourself: Heed the wisdom in Luke 14 and consider the cost in time and resources. To begin and quit is far worse than never beginning. Many of the activities do not require significant funding while some will require more. Effectiveness has less to do with funds and more to do with application and dedication over years and decades. Personally, living and working at the margins often exposes you and yours to opposition and violence. Satan will not go quietly as his Church storms his strongholds in word and deed. But, you are never alone.

Unanswered Tensions: We did not address many tensions inherent in GCCD. Should we create GCCD organizations outside of a church? What should be the bounds of a partner church's authority over the work or their funds? What should be the neighborhood's local church's authority over your work? How should we work with secular, for profit, and government partners? How do we build decision processes that honor the residents' wishes that may be opposed to Christ or the Church? How do we combat destructive personal behaviors while affirming the inherent value and environmental context of the individual? Our team is in agreement that there are not clear answers in most of these tensions and often the right path is best influenced by the context, relationships, and the individuals involved.

Bob Lupton uses the term "exchange" when referring to working with those on the margins. You will invest time, resources, and long-suffering. Even though the personal cost is great, if you follow Jesus down the path of commitment to GCCD, you will see the miraculous work of the Spirit, know Jesus more fully, and take from this journey far more than you ever imagined or invested. He promised: you are not alone.

So, come join the movement of the Spirit!

-GCCD Team



*if you pour yourself out for the hungry
& satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
then shall your light rise in the darkness
& your gloom be as the noonday.
& the Lord will guide you continually
& satisfy your desire in
scorched places
& make your bones strong;
& you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters do not fail.*

Isaiah 58:10-11

NOTE: This document is pared down from a longer resource that is available for reference for those who truly desire to undertake Gospel-Centered Community Development. While many additional resources are available within that document, a few references to the longer work will be marked in orange, such as:

**Refer to our Extended Resource & Appendices for "A Word from Bob Lupton: When Mercy & Justice Collide on Page 6*

*"Allow whatever we undertake
this day to succeed
in tending to your glory,
the good of our neighbor,
& the salvation of our souls."*

- John Wesley

DEFINING GOSPEL-CENTERED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What is Gospel-Centered Community Development?

Gospel-Centered Community Development (GCCD) is about loving our neighbor by fostering a dignifying exchange that empowers those that live in the impoverished margins of our world. GCCD is about the Kingdom of God coming to marginalized communities through the people of God committing to long-term relationships that foster sustainable development and restoration of under-resourced neighborhoods. By the power of Christ, GCCD seeks to tangibly demonstrate the hope of the Gospel by building an individual's capacity to prosper in all areas of life and, ultimately, live as a redeemed community together.

What are the biblical foundations for Gospel-Centered Community Development?

Cities and communities are made up of *people*. And the Bible is clear: *God loves people*. And equally as plain: *God loves the poor and the marginalized*. In both the Old and the New Testaments, we see that He has uniquely called his Church to serve these people groups.

In the New Testament, Jesus mandates that we are to love our neighbor, to serve the poor, and to reach out to the marginalized. The cornerstone of GCCD is this commandment: *to love our neighbor*. The goal of GCCD is to love the poor and marginalized in a dignifying, empowering, and sustainable manner.

Among many examples in the Old Testament, we see the example of a city being restored in Nehemiah, we see God's heart for justice in Amos, and we see God's call to his people to seek the welfare of the city in Jeremiah. Through his willing servants (such as Isaiah) to his unwilling servants (like Jonah), the Kingdom of God will be extended throughout the high places and the low, throughout cities and hills, to every people, tribe, nation, and tongue.

The question is: will we answer this Biblical imperative to love the poor in word and deed? Will we do so in a way that is dignifying, empowering, and strategic?

*⁶Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
& to break every yoke?*

*⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
& bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,*

& not to hide yourself from your own kin?
⁸*Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,*
& your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator[a] shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.
⁹*Then you shall call, & the Lord will answer;*
you shall cry for help, & he will say, Here I am.
If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
¹⁰*if you offer your food to the hungry*
& satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
& your gloom be like the noonday.
¹¹*The Lord will guide you continually,*
& satisfy your needs in parched places,
& make your bones strong;
& you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.
¹²*Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;*
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

Isaiah 58: 6-12

What are the key principles of Gospel-Centered Community Development?

Gospel-Centered Community Development is an incredibly broad task, and is only effective to the degree that it is first about the people of the community, which is unique in every neighborhood and every person. The work must, must, *must* be **led in full partnership with the neighborhood**, its felt needs, its heart. At best, the GCCD organization is but one tool in the arsenal, but one that often proves a **God-powered** tipping point toward justice and health.

GCCD is about **building relationships, dignity, capacity, and hope**. Success depends on trust and is often a fitful, long-term journey where the Holy Spirit forges a **community** of Christ-like neighbors. Therefore, the work of GCCD practitioners - whether paid or volunteer - must be viewed as **sacred** and as a **long-term commitment**. To start and depart in an unreasonable time, only reinforces stereotypes, distrust, and hopelessness. It is destructive to the community. Similarly, this **slow process** must be viewed by partner churches and other organizations in an equally critical long-term commitment perspective.

In the US, GCCD became a **movement** inspired by the visionary leadership of John Perkins, Bob Lupton, Wayne Gordon, and other urban leaders who coalesced to form the Christian Community Development

Association (CCDA.org). The core principles guiding CCDA were known as the 3 R's: Relocation, Redistribution, and Reconciliation.

Relocation emphasizes the importance of living among the people we serve, becoming a redemptive influence with neighbors who live in neglected and crime-ridden communities. Relocated neighbors bring much-needed resources and connections into the community, and join with residents to strengthen personal faith, improved quality of life, and economic capacity.

Redistribution is the predictable result of becoming caring neighbors. When we see a neighbor in need and have the capacity to assist them, our hearts compel us to share our time, our resources, and our connections, in personal, responsible, and accountable ways. In this way, sharing can become reciprocal and the healthy exchange among neighbors becomes empowering.

Reconciliation is the bringing of alienated humanity into a right relationship with God and with each other. Building a "Beloved Community" as envisioned by Dr. King involves bridging respectful, trusting relationships across the divides of race, class, status, and other barriers that separate people. Genuine reconciliation can be best accomplished when diverse neighbors share life together in the same community.

(The 3 have expanded to the 8 that are in Wayne Gordon's referenced summary <https://nsc-church.org/CCDA%208%20Points.pdf>)

How do we affirm the dignity of people, motivate them and help them take responsibility for their own lives? By beginning with the people's felt needs we establish a relationship and a trust, which then enables us to move to deeper issues of development. This idea of beginning with people's felt need is what is called the felt need concept. It is summed up in a Chinese poem...

Go to the people
Live among them
Learn from them
Love them
Start with what they know
Build on what they have:
But of the best leaders
When their task is done
The people will remark
"We have done it ourselves."

**-Excerpt from John Perkins in
Restoring At-Risk Communities**

How is development different from a handout?

From Bob Lupton

Have you noticed that many of the same people return week after week for free food from our food pantries? Ever wondered whether our handouts were really helping or merely perpetuating a dependent lifestyle? Admitting and verbalizing these observations, at the risk of appearing heartless, is the essential first step toward truly effective service.

The key to effective service is accurately matching the need with the appropriate intervention.

The universal need for food is a good place to begin. Starvation is a crisis issue; hunger is a chronic issue. When famine sweeps a land, or a tsunami devastates coastal cities, starvation becomes an urgent, life-and-death situation. Emergency food supplies must be rushed in without delay. But in a stable nation with abundant supplies of food and adequate government food subsidies, occasional hunger – not

starvation – is the reality that faces the less advantaged. Food insecurity is a chronic, not crisis, poverty issue.

Food security is what free-food advocates talk about these days. That means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. The poor in our country, roughly 15% of our population, are food-insecure at least some time during the year. Even though four out of five of these households receive food from the government, there are times when their cupboards are bare.

A **crisis** requires emergency intervention;
A **chronic** problem requires development.
Address a **crisis** need with a **crisis** intervention,
and lives are saved.
Address a **chronic** need with a **crisis** intervention,
and people are harmed.

-Bob Lupton

But food-insecurity is not a crisis issue. It is a function of chronic poverty. Unlike during the great depression of the 1930's when one in four of our workers stood in bread lines with no government safety net to rescue them, today more than 90% of our workforce is employed and our public subsidies are ample. Hunger is not our problem. Poor nutrition perhaps but not hunger. Food insecurity is a chronic poverty issue and chronic problems require altogether different strategies from crisis problems.

*Starvation is a crisis need;
Hunger is a chronic issue.
Address hunger (chronic) with a free feeding program (crisis)
And unhealthy dependency occurs.*

As our hearts constrain us to intervene on behalf of our needy neighbors, we certainly want our responses to be effective. And to be truly effective we must match the need with the appropriate response. Distributing free food (an emergency response) is seldom an appropriate response to those facing chronic food-insecurity. It may seem compassionate at the moment but in all likelihood it will prove to be more hurtful than helpful.

But isn't it a crisis when a family does not know where their next meal is coming from? Admittedly, this is a crisis of a sort, the type of crisis that spurs one to action. Hunger is a powerful motivator. It stretches budgets. It drives creativity. It forces choices. It accepts peanut butter sandwiches over McDonald's big-meals, cool-aide over coke, beans and rice over potato chips and dip. Food insecurity may not be all bad.

Lest we become hard-hearted and err on the judgmental side, however, let's proactively pursue some helpful responses to chronic hunger. Of course, one of the best antidotes to food insecurity is decent employment. Adequate income provides adequate food. And, as ancient Talmudic wisdom contends, the highest form of charity is to provide a man a job. Employment training and job creation is obviously a major shift from the food pantry paradigm but it is certainly one that should be considered. Another alternative more directly related to food is the food cooperative – a "buying club" model that gives members legitimate access to surplus food through non-profit or church structures. Another is a bartering system that exchanges food (and other commodities) for work performed in the community. Rather than dependency-fostering emergency responses, these and other development strategies strengthen the capacity of people in need to assume greater measure of control and self-sufficiency over their own lives.

Compassion is essential but not sufficient – the mind as well as the heart must be engaged.

How is participatory development different from blueprint development?

Ideas and quotes from Brian Fikkert and Kelly Kapic pages 113-114 of The Field Guide to Becoming Whole: Principles for Poverty Alleviation Ministries (Moody Publishers 2019)

The Golden Rule of empowering service:
Never do for others what they have the capacity to do for themselves.

As much as we would like to take control, we cannot make choices for others, especially in the context of community development. Every course of action must be “owned” by the individual or community that it is seeking to help in order for there to be lasting and sustainable change.

As we walk with Joe, we must view him as the responsible party for making lasting changes happen in his own life. And like other folks, Joe will be more likely to take ownership of plans that he has helped to shape and direct, rather than a blueprint plan that has been forced upon him.

Blueprint approaches do not seek to engage Joe in the process or value his input. Instead, blueprint plans take the power out of Joe’s hand. Blueprint plans presumptuously and ineffectively impose an outsider’s directive. As Kapic and Fikkert write:

“A blueprint approach fails to create the necessary ownership of the change process that is essential if materially poor people are going to initiate and sustain the necessary changes in their lives. In addition, a blueprint approach tends to exacerbate the harmful dynamic in which the materially non-poor ‘play god,’ speaking and acting in ways that confirm the sense of inferiority and shame that many low-income people already feel.”

Clearly, blueprint approaches should be avoided if we are to see the long-lasting fruit of GCCD in people and communities. Instead, participatory approaches value the individual by asking good questions, supporting, providing feedback, and helping generate strategies. Along with approaches like Asset Based Community Development (discussed later), we must seek to see Joe’s assets, not just the deficiencies of his situation, because Joe is a capable image bearer of God. As they write,

“This does not mean that we should never speak into [Joe’s] life, but simply that we should try to act in a way that is consistent with biblical truth, recognizing that, as an image bearer, Joe has insights and abilities, and he is called by God to be the primary person who stewards those insights and abilities by using them to initiate and sustain changes that move towards becoming whole.”

How do we start?

GCCD is NOT a program to be copied and deployed in under-resourced communities. It is a redemptive, relational process founded on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. GCCD builds hope, capacity, and dignity while addressing the felt physical and spiritual needs of everyone involved.

This committee strives to offer material that it believes the Holy Spirit has empowered and that are helpful to build awareness for those embarking on GCCD commitments in under-resourced communities. The examples here are a product of the team members' experience, both in the Wesleyan tradition and from other Christ-centered, Kingdom-minded traditions. Additionally, the broad GCCD/CCD community is incredibly generous with their insight and experience. We strongly encourage you to reach out and build relationships in the movement, learn from each other, and find strength for the journey.

What is the task of the church? We are to embody Jesus Christ by doing what He did and what He continues to do through us: declare—using both words and deeds—that Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords who is bringing in a kingdom of righteousness, justice, and peace. And the church needs to do this where Jesus did it, among the blind, the lame, the sick and outcast, and the poor.

- Fikkert & Corbett in
"When Helping Hurts"

The "elephant" in this room is important for all GCCD practitioners to embrace is that while this is a rewarding and God-anointed call, to truly help those at the margins, it is also often gut-wrenchingly painful and fatiguing. Those who lead and resource this work must always be mindful not to apply the secular norms of achievement and ease, and to adequately care for the front-line practitioners and their holistic health. They will be rejected and confronted. Their clients' development or progress will be slow or often marked by self-destructive retreats. They, their neighbors, and their clients will be assaulted and literally killed. As Jesus said: "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

Just as Jesus promised, we have collectively experienced much pain, grief, and loss throughout our years of serving communities on the margins. And yet...

God has proven himself to be our Sustainer, our Hope, and even our Joy through the pain. May He be so to you. He will not keep you from experiencing deep pain, but *He will be with you.* (Matthew 28:20b)

What are essential resources for jumping into GCCD?

- *8 Components of Christian Community Development* by Dr. Wayne L. Gordon ([https://www.nsc-church.org/CCDA 8 Points.pdf](https://www.nsc-church.org/CCDA%20Points.pdf))
- *Becoming Whole: Why the Opposite of Poverty isn't the American Dream* by Brian Fikkert and Kelly M. Kapic (Moody 2019)
- Christian Community Development Association (ccda.org)
- *Compassion, Justice, & the Christian Life* by Robert Lupton (Regal 2007)
- FCS / Lupton's Urban Perspectives Archives
<https://www.fcsministries.org/blog/category/Urban+Perspectives>
- *A Field Guide to Becoming Whole: Principles for Poverty Alleviation Ministries* by Brian Fikkert and Kelly M. Kapic (Moody 2019)

- *Helping without Hurting: The Small Group Experience*, facilitator's guide and online videos, by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert (Moody 2014)
- *Let Justice Roll Down* by John Perkins (Baker Books 2012)
- *Nonprofit Management: Principles and Practice* by Michael J. Worth (SAGE Publications 2016)
- Online Course: Practicing the King's Economy <https://chalmers.org/product/practicing-the-kings-economy-online-course/>
- *Practicing the King's Economy: Honoring Jesus in How We Work, Earn, Spend, Save, and Give* by Michael Rhodes, Robby Holt, and Brian Fikkert (Baker Books 2018)
- *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together & Doing It Right* by John M. Perkins (Baker Books 1996)
- *Serving with Eyes Wide Open: Doing Short-Term Missions With Cultural Intelligence* by David A. Livermore (Baker Books 2012)
- Tips on strategies for gathering neighborhood input: <https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/public-participation-guide-tools-generate-and-obtain-public-input>
- *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City* by Mark Gornik (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2002)
- *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help, And How to Reverse It* by Bob Lupton (HarperOne 2012)
- *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* by Bryant L Myers (Orbis 2011)
- *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself* by Corbett and Fikkert (Moody 2014)

KEY AREAS OF GOSPEL-CENTERED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

WHOLE HEARTS

As we serve in community development, it is important that we keep first things first: the Gospel-centered nature of our mission. As we seek to serve communities in both word and deed, it is first important that we have a firm grasp on what the Gospel is.

What is the Gospel?: The Purpose of the Mission

"God creates a beautiful world and calls humanity to serve as His image-bearers, a community of priest-kings who protect and develop His creation for His glory. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve sin against God, which results in human beings' loss of vocation as priest-kings, puts them under Satan's dominion, and distorts every square inch of the creation. But God does not abandon His handiwork. Through His life, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ becomes our substitute, overcoming sin, death, and the Devil, ascending to the right hand of the Father as our holy and loving Lord. From there He reigns—right now—over a kingdom that is bringing shalom by transforming the present cosmos into a new one. The community of people who have saving faith in Christ—the true church—are rescued from the kingdom of darkness, immediately become new creatures in Christ, are declared righteous by reason of our union with Him, and serve as a community of restored priest-kings. When Christ returns, His kingdom will be completely consummated, and the true church will be restored to full human flourishing, continuing to serve as a community of fully-embodied, restored priest-kings in the new creation."

Excerpt from *Becoming Whole: Why the Opposite of Poverty isn't the American Dream* by Brian Fikkert and Kelly M. Kopic (Moody 2019), pp. 201-202.

Prayer: The Power of the Mission

BIG PICTURE: Establishing prayer groups with local Christians living and serving within the community can be a powerful way to see and experience where God is already at work in the community. Going on prayer walks together throughout the neighborhood to pray over homes, businesses, and the community can focus your awareness and center your prayer on the people you seek to serve. After all, nothing can be accomplished apart from the Spirit and power of God. As stated by EM Bounds: “Little prayer, little power; much prayer, much power.”

I put myself wholly into Thy hands; put me to what Thou wilt, rank me with whom Thou wilt; put me to doing, put me to suffering, let me be employed for Thee, or laid aside for Thee, or trodden under foot for Thee; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing, I freely, and heartily resign all to Thy pleasure and disposal.

- John Wesley

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Prayer is our **greatest tool** in serving our marginalized neighbors, and must be a **prioritized** and **strategic** effort.
- Prayer **humbles us** before God and before man.
- Without the spirit of God, there is no power. We cannot accomplish anything apart from the **power** and **presence** of God.
- A spirit of **unity, humility, & love** should be promoted between churches, even of different traditions.

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- *Acts 29 Blueprint for the House of Prayer: Engaging Your City Through Strategic Prayer (Teach Us to Pray Series)* by Dr. Terry Teykl (Prayer Point Press 1999)
- *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Hearts of His People* by Jim Cymbala (Zondervan 2003)
- Global Prayer Digest Frontier Ventures: <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/>
- *How to Pray: The Best of John Wesley on Prayer* by John Wesley (Barbour Publishing 2008)
- *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation* by Jason Mandryk (IVP Books 2010)
- *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church* by John Onwuchekwa (Crossway 2019)
- *Prayer Revolution: Rebuilding Church and City Through Prayer* by John Smed (Moody Publishers 2020)
- *Praying God's Word: Breaking Free from Spiritual Strongholds* by Beth Moore (B&H Books 2018)
- *Touch the World through Prayer* by Wesley Duewel (Zondervan 1986)
- *When God's People Pray* by Jim Cymbala (Zondervan 2007)

Evangelism & Discipleship: The Delight of the Mission

BIG PICTURE: As we build relationships with individuals and work in marginalized communities, we do so as *Gospel* people, or people of *the Good News*. Wherever we go, we will have opportunities to speak about or tangibly demonstrate the hope of the Gospel. Discipleship happens when we bring people along with us as we follow Jesus. We often over-complicate these things.

As you grow in GCCD while seeking God in his Word, in prayer, and in centering your work on the Gospel, you will become more fluent in the Gospel in daily life. The best way to start evangelism is to: start. Talk about Jesus. Talk about what He means to you. Talk about how He has changed your life. Ask God for opportunities, keep your eyes open for them, and He will graciously give them to you!

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **Recognize** that *we are not Jesus* and that God has already been at work in this community long before we arrived. We simply get the delight of humbly joining him in this work.
- **Know** deep down in your bones that each person you come into contact with is highly valued by the Creator and needs to hear the hope of the Gospel.
- **Seize** opportunities to speak about Jesus and the Gospel.
- Be **patient & prayerful**, knowing that the work is long-term and that nothing can be accomplished apart from the Spirit of God.

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- *Among Wolves: Disciple-Making in the City* by Dhati Lewis (B&H Books 2017)
- Course (Online & Free): Evangelism in a Skeptical World: TGC by Sam Chan <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/evangelism-skeptical-world/#introduction>
- *Evangelism as Exiles: Life on Mission as Strangers in our Own Land* by Elliot Clark (The Gospel Coalition 2019)
- *Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News about Jesus More Believable* by Sam Chan (Zondervan Academic 2018)
- *Evangelism is More than Words* - Bob Lupton
- *Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements* by Alan Hirsch Brazos Press 2016)
- Podcast: *Help! I'm Not Ready to Share My Faith* by Carson, McLaughlin, & Smethurst
- Podcast: *How Your Church Can Grow in Evangelistic Effectiveness* by Hansen & Raymond <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/tgc-podcast/church-can-grow-evangelistic-effectiveness/>
- *Urban Apologetics: Restoring Black Dignity with the Gospel* by Eric Mason (Zondervan 2021)
- *Urban Evangelism* from Lausanne by Dr. Greenway <https://www.lausanne.org/content/urban-evangelism>
- Video: *How Evangelism Works in a Post-Christian Culture* by Joshua Ryan Butler <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/video/evangelism-works-post-christian-culture/>

The Local Church: The Vehicle of the Mission

BIG PICTURE: The local church has a vital role to play in the mission of God to restore communities for his glory. God has chosen his people as the vehicle of his mission for restoration and reconciliation. As such, we are not called to shelter ourselves from the outside world.

Just as Christ entered the world in the flesh (John 1), He sends us into the world as his hands and feet, to share his Gospel and extend his kingdom in the earth. As is described in *Becoming Whole* by Fikkert and Kopic:

“First, there are some things the Bible indicates that the church should do directly: preach the Word, administer the sacraments, exercise discipline, engage in fellowship, and care for the poor, especially poor believers (Gal. 2:10). When the church engages in these activities, it directly ministers holistically to the people in its midst.

“Second, some believers are called to be involved in parachurch ministries, which explicitly seek to help the church fulfill its mission by undertaking tasks that are beyond the capacity of the local church...

“Third, some believers are called to serve as priest-kings in institutions that are not parachurch ministries in that they are not engaged in explicitly Christian ministry (such as government, business, the arts, and civic organizations). While these institutions are not rooted in the local church, Christ is the Creator, Sustainer, and Reconciler of all things, including these institutions, so Christians must work in them as well, faithfully seeking to use words and deeds that bear witness to the present and future reign of Christ as much as possible (Matt. 5:16; Col. 1:15–20).”

(Excerpts & figure from pages 35-36 of *A Field Guide to Becoming Whole: Principles for Poverty Alleviation Ministries* by Fikkert and Kopic)

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **Unity** with other churches and parachurch organizations keeps efforts Kingdom-focused.
- Understand that the **secular jobs** of those in the Church are actually **sacred callings**.
- Instead of grasping for control, partner churches (from outside of the community) should seek to **empower** and **resource** local churches (that exist within the community).

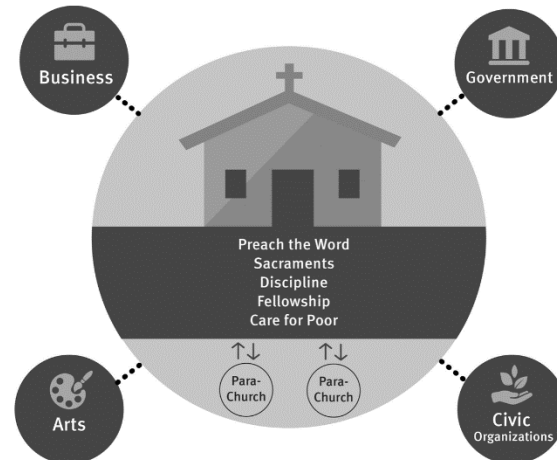


Figure 2.1

The Church, Para-Church, and Larger Society

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- *Becoming Whole: Why the Opposite of Poverty isn't the American Dream* by Brian Fikkert and Kelly M. Kapic (Moody 2019)
- *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* by Timothy J. Keller (Zondervan 2012)
- *Churches that make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* by Ronald J. Sider/Philip N. Olson/ Heidi HollandUnruh
- *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* by Rodney M. Woo (B&H Publishing 2009)
- *The Externally Focused Church* by Rick Rusaw/ Eric Swanson (Group 2004)
- *A Field Guide to Becoming Whole: Principles for Poverty Alleviation Ministries* by Brian Fikkert and Kelly M. Kapic (Moody 2019)
- *Gentry-Church* by Bob Lupton
- *Making Your Partnership Work : A Guide for Ministry Leaders* by Daniel Rickett (Winepress Publishing 2002)
- *A New Kind of Big: How Churches of any Size Can Partner to Transform Communities* by Chip Sweeney (Baker Books 2011)
- *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the US* by Michael O. Emerson (Princeton University Press 2006)
- *Theirs Is the Kingdom: Celebrating the Gospel in Urban America* by Robert D. Lupton (HarperOne 2011)

Paternalism

the system, principle, or practice of managing or governing individuals, businesses, nations, etc., in the manner of a father dealing benevolently and often intrusively with his children

-From dictionary.com

FLOURISHING HOMES & BLOCKS

Restoring Houses & Properties

BIG PICTURE: The hopelessness of abandoned and blighted neighborhood properties catalyzes crime and motivates residents with capacity to flee, leaving behind vulnerable neighbors and spawning the downward spiral of a community. A significant opportunity exists to use a tipping point strategy in targeted areas to purchase the worst properties, to place an economic floor in the market, to rehab salvageable houses (which can be construction job training) and to work with residents toward their Godly rental or in home ownership programs. A key to success is the aggressive early property purchase so that the GCCD organization can have great influence on the ultimate low-income beneficiary residents,

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

- 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

building the proper balance of income mix to promote strength and health, while limiting speculative gentrification. The renovated properties can provide wonderful opportunities for reneighboring families (teachers, medical, GCCD staff, and job training graduates) to put down roots, provide positive models, provide economic support, and build neighbor relationships.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **Long-term** strategy that seeks to serve, and not displace, the poor while supporting mixed income families, often developed there, and that provide critical economic support for a healthy community
- **New renters and homeowners** are also critical to offsetting the Broken Window effect associated with blighted, abandoned properties, and central to crime reduction
- **Community input process** that allows long-time residents to have a stake in the planning & outcomes of revitalization
- **Mentoring**, a homeownership program, and/or financial literacy assistance is important in helping families successfully move into homeownership as they make payments on the property

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together & Doing It Right* by John M. Perkins (Baker Books 1996)
- *Compassion, Justice, & the Christian Life* by Robert Lupton (Regal 2007)
- *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* by Malcolm Gladwell (BackBay Books 2002), specifically chapter four on the Broken Window Theory
- *The Power of Asset Mapping* by Luther K. Snow (Alban Institute 2004)

Intentional Neighboring

BIG PICTURE: The Gospel of John opens with a passage about Jesus Emmanuel coming in the flesh, or *incarnate*. Just like the One we follow, God's people are not called to serve the poor from a distance by "throwing money at the problem of poverty". Instead, we are called to get up close and personal with those on the margins. This may mean that some people from your local church or GCCD group consider moving into the community. Intentional neighboring, whether relocating neighbors or existing neighbors, is about living with intentionality in the neighborhood to listen, to learn, and to humbly serve. Partnering with intentional neighbors within the body of Christ can foster a sense of community and synergy that sparks community restoration.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- To truly begin to understand the community that is served, **relocation** into the neighborhood may be necessary for some from the local church.
- An **attitude of humility** is essential to forming relationships with those who live around you.
- **Staying connected** with a local church is imperative. It can become difficult to maintain your sense of spiritual community when you are living a different cultural experience, but having brothers and sisters alongside you is vital to your spiritual health.
- **Intentionally engage** the community.

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- *The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World* by Rosaria Butterfield (Crossway 2018)
- Gospel Fluency by Jeff Vandersteldt on TGC at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/gospel-fluency/#introduction>.
- Online Course from the Chalmers Center: Are You A Good Neighbor? <https://chalmers.org/product/are-you-a-good-neighbor/>
- *Where Would Jesus Live* by Melissa Huff (article) <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/where-would-jesus-live/>

Restoration Ministries: Drug, Alcohol, Human-trafficking, & Prison Ministries

BIG PICTURE: While there is a subcommittee focused on addiction and recovery, these issues can be strongholds in communities.

THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Education: Working with Youth & Schools

BIG PICTURE: Working with schools, students, and kids in the neighborhood is a fun and practical way for volunteers to engage the community. It is also a great jumping off point for local churches, as kids are an avenue to working with their parents. Whether through tutoring, mentoring, childcare, summer camps, or community gatherings, there are many ways to engage young people in education and development. These initiatives can have a long-lasting impact on them... and you.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- When working in schools, it is important to **engage the administration** and/or counselors to see where the greatest needs are. Ask them questions instead of providing them with your own solutions. The principles of *blueprint vs participatory approaches* is important in order for schools to have a voice and ownership in the process.
- Connecting schools with additional tangible or monetary **resources** can reinforce your commitment to the school. It is important to remember that, oftentimes, schools in under-resourced neighborhoods face many more issues than in affluent areas of town. You may assume that a school needs books, when in reality they need more resources for preventing their third graders from being recruited by gangs.
- When building mentoring relationships, it is important that **time and relationships** be central instead of gifts or extravagant experiences. The same principles that are employed with adults for chronic vs crisis situations should also be used with young people.
- Practical **child safety policies** should be put into place for anyone working with young people. Please refer to Safe Sanctuary or similar policies.

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- **Article: Background Checks: The Importance of Screening Volunteers**
<https://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/mentor-resources-and-publications/background-checks/>

- **Article: Mission with Children at Risk from Lausanne:** <https://www.lausanne.org/content/lop/mission-children-risk-lop-66>
- **Article: Supporting & Inspiring Native Youth** <https://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/mentor-resources-and-publications/supporting-and-inspiring-native-youth/>
- **Youth Leader Development:** <https://www.soulmemphis.org/mission-index-impact> SOUL, through various channels, seeks to recruit potential outreach workers and place them in urban ministries throughout Memphis. SOUL resources ministries through providing funding to Christian organizations that are called to expand their reach in the city. SOUL trains workers, through a two year curriculum covering the basic tenets of outreach, evangelism, discipleship, and educational programming, as well as other culturally relevant topics.
- Director Training through **Kids Hope USA** <https://kidshopeusa.org/training-events/>
- Emmanuel Gospel Center article on **Mentoring Urban Youth** <https://www.egc.org/blog-2/2017/6/6/urban-youth-mentoring>
- *The Kindness of Strangers: Adult Mentors, Urban Youth, and the New Voluntarism* by Marc Freedman (Cambridge University Press 1999)
- *Manhood Restored: How the Gospel Makes Men Whole* by Eric Mason (B&H Books 2013)
- *The Miracles of Mentoring: How to Encourage and Lead Future Generations* by Thomas Dortch Jr. and The 100 Black Men of America, Inc. (Broadway Books 2001)

Economic Development

BIG PICTURE: Economic development is an expansive subject. For our purposes, we will narrow the subject to *community* economic development (CED) which focuses on the economic health of a defined neighborhood. While there are many factors that contribute to the overall economic health of a community (safety, education, nutrition, health care, employment opportunities to name a few), there are a few measurable criteria that directly relate to economic development.

Jobs, job training, and job placement: Nothing is more fundamental to empowering disadvantaged communities to emerge from poverty than decently paying jobs. Entry-level, minimum wage employment may be useful to teach young people job-readiness skills but a livable wage is essential for thriving. Preparation for the world of work can (and should) begin early when children are forming life patterns. Youth programs can be shaped to reinforce a healthy work ethic, responsibility, integrity, and even basic money management. Unhealthy work habits, once established, are troublesome to unlearn.

Job creation: Nonprofits are great at creating work opportunities, especially when it relates to service in the community. Summer jobs programs, clerking at a thrift store, mowing lawns – such are important ways to instill a work ethic while building relationships and earning some spending money. But for the most part, true economic development takes place in a community when for-profit businesses decide to operate there. A supermarket, a branch bank, a home construction business – such are wealth-generating enterprises that create legitimate employment as well as needed services in the community. Christian business people who sit in our pew on Sunday often have the very skills, connections, and capital required to initiate these much-needed businesses. They are better equipped to do effective community economic development ministry than the high-touch volunteers who lead with their hearts.

Do no harm: Any ministry activity, no matter how compassionate or well-motivated, that erodes a work ethic, fosters dependency, or encourages entitlement must be viewed as unhelpful and ultimately dis-empowering. Healthy exchange when both giver and recipient bring something of value to the negotiating table promotes mutuality and enhances human dignity.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **Recognize** that the most **important input** is from the individual or community that is served.
- Assess **assets** in the individual and community. ABCD Strategy described in *When Helping Hurts* by Corbett & Fikkert is helpful in this key area.
- Keep **long-term** progress in mind with **small, reachable goals** as steps to get there.
- The goal is not to pursue the “American Dream” of personal prosperity: the goal is to serve others.
- Work is not a necessary evil we engage in to generate income; properly understood, work is a way of worshipping God, serving our neighbors, and affirming personal value and dignity. We can view our work as a part of the mission of God, whether we work in the kitchen of a fast food restaurant or work in the C suite. (See resources below on Business as Mission)
- Financial literacy is a stepping stone to economic freedom to wealth creation.

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- BridgeBuilders: <https://bridgebuilders.org/what-we-do> Through BridgeBuilders’ Engage initiative, ministry associates & volunteers engage our Adopt-A-Block, Hoop Church, & outreach programs to serve the community alongside residents.
- *Business as Mission: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice* by C. Neal Johnson (IVP Academic 2009)
- Business As Mission Website: <https://businessasmission.com/>
- The Chalmers Center: www.chalmers.org
- Faith and Finances <https://chalmers.org/faith-finances/> Christ-centered training way to help people in poverty overcome financial challenges
- **Faith Driven Entrepreneur:** (website and podcast) <https://www.faithdrivenentrepreneur.org/> The Faith Driven Entrepreneur is an informal initiative formed from the experiences of a few dozen of us that are committed to our faith, and who believe that God uses entrepreneurs to bring about His Kingdom here on earth. Our mission is to help entrepreneurs who are hard at work on the trail.
- The Federal Reserve: *Building Wealth - A Beginner’s Guide to Securing Your Financial Future* - <https://www.dallasfed.org/-/media/microsites/cd/wealth/index.html>
- *A Framework for Understanding Poverty - A Cognitive Approach* by Dr. Ruby Payne (aha! Process 2018)
- Jobs for Life: <https://www.jobsforlife.org/> JFL addresses root causes of unemployment, underemployment, & disengagement with work by uniting churches, businesses, & organizations & facilitating positive transformation within lives & communities.
- Local banks: banks are required to do neighborhood outreach, teach financial literacy, and have other programs that may be useful for the community.
- *The Missional Entrepreneur: Principles and Practices for Business as Mission* by Mark L. Russell (New Hope Publishers 2010)
- Online Course: Practicing the King’s Economy <https://chalmers.org/product/practicing-the-kings-economy-online-course/>
- Partners Worldwide: <https://www.partnersworldwide.org/> Business is the most effective way to fight poverty. Around the world, we partner with locally-led organizations to support business growth and job creation so that people may be equipped to lift themselves—and their families and communities—out of poverty for good.
- PDF: *Franchising the Kingdom* by Bob Lupton

- *The Poor Will Be Glad: Joining the Revolution to Lift the World Out of Poverty* by Peter Greer (ReadHowYouWant 2012), focus on international ministry & poverty.
- *Practicing the King's Economy: Honoring Jesus in How We Work, Earn, Spend, Save, and Give* by Michael Rhodes, Robby Holt, and Brian Fikkert (Baker Books 2018)
- *The Social Entrepreneur* by the Asbury Project (Seedbed Publishing 2015)
- *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself* by Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett (Moody Publishers 2014)
- Work Life Training <https://chalmers.org/work-life-training/> The Chalmers Center trains churches and ministries in *Work Life*, a biblically integrated job preparedness curriculum designed specifically for people from backgrounds of generational poverty.
- Dave Ramsey resources, such as 7 Baby Steps <https://www.daveramsey.com/dave-ramsey-7-baby-steps?snid=footer.getstarted.babysteps>

JUST SYSTEMS & ACCESS FOR ALL

Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. Isaiah 1:17

Racial Reconciliation

BIG PICTURE: While there is a subcommittee committed specifically to racial reconciliation, this topic plays a pivotal role in communities across our country and the world. We will list out below some key recommendations, but will defer to the subcommittee on racial reconciliation.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Be willing to **listen deeply** to the experiences of others.
- As you partner with those of other races, **value** and **respond** to their priorities.
- Do **research** on the facts & experiences of people who look different than you.
- **Live among** people who look different than you.
- Explore the Bible to see what God has to say about **justice, race, and reconciliation.**
- Be **humble!**

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- *Advocates: The Narrow Path to Racial Reconciliation* by Dhati Lewis (B&H Books 2019)
- *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation* by Latasha Morrison (WaterBrook 2019)
- *A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World* by Patty Lane (Intervarsity Press 2002)
- *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism* by Jemar Tisby (Zondervan 2019)
- *Cross Cultural Partnerships: Navigating the Complexities of Money and Missions* by Mary T. Lederleitner (Intervarsity Press 2010)
- *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World* by David A. Livermore (Baker Publishing 2009)
- *How to Fight Racism: Courageous Christianity and the Journey Toward Racial Justice* by Jemar Tisby (Zondervan 2021)
- *Insider Outsider: My Journey as a Stranger in White Evangelicalism and My Hope for Us All* by Bryan Loritts (Zondervan 2018)
- *One Blood: Parting Words to the Church on Race and Love* by John Perkins (Moody Publishers 2018)
- *Oneness Embraced: Reconciliation, The Kingdom, and How We Grow Stronger Together* by Tony Evans (Moody Publishers 2011)
- *Woke Church: An Urgent Call for Christians in America to Confront Racism and Injustice* by Eric Mason (Moody 2018)

As the only Native American clergy person in the Dakotas Conference, I've had many pastors tell me what they are doing for "my people". They are "doing" for people like me, without me being involved except as a recipient. It's an "I'm going to do good things for you without your input" mentality. Instead, we want people to walk beside us & give us the skills we need to get out of the incessant poverty of the Reservation system, so we can stop being dependent on the others.

I've seen the results of this forced help. Dependency breeds a loss of hope. People turn to alcohol, drugs, & promiscuity to deal with the hopelessness of poverty. Fear, gang affiliation, & even suicide become a reality within the Native community. My own brother committed suicide after becoming an alcoholic & drug addict & feeling that taking his own life was the only option to remove his pain. I wish people didn't "help" the marginalized as an outlet for feeling better about themselves, but sought to empower the marginalized to learn how to better their own lives & to move from hopelessness towards real hope & a brighter future.

-from Mark Britton

Access to Food

BIG PICTURE: Food insecurity is a prevalent problem in under-resourced neighborhoods. Oftentimes, lack of access to healthy and affordable foods creates a food desert for large portions of developed cities. To address these insecurities, it is important to ask whether the needs are chronic or crisis. Unless there has been a catastrophic event like a tornado or hurricane, most needs in marginalized communities are chronic. As such, these issues must be engaged strategically. Depending on the needs, there are many ways to foster greater food security: community gardens, teaching cooking and growing classes, seed swaps, food co-ops, chain grocery store engagement, civic engagement, private business and government investment, and more.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- A **long-term strategy** is important for long-term results.

- **Assess** what factors are causing lack of food access. Lack of transportation or other factors can be a hindrance to food access.
- **Start small.** Going too big too early could prove to be unsustainable.
- **Gather input** from neighbors, community leaders, and the local business community.

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- *The Community Gardening Handbook: The Guide to Organizing, Planting, and Caring for a Community Garden (Hobby Farms)* by Ben Raskin (CompanionHouse Books 2017)
- *Community Gardens (Urban Gardening and Farming for Teens)* by Susan Burns Chong (Rosen Classroom 2014)
- Food Security for America Training: <https://foodsecurityforamerica.org/what-we-do/>
- *The Great Courses' How to Grow Anything: Food Gardening for Everyone* video series. Check your local library's online resources

Access to Healthcare

BIG PICTURE: Accessible and affordable healthcare can be a heavy burden on the poor. Even transportation to get help can be difficult to manage. While creating a health clinic might not be within your abilities, the church can be creative with helping address healthcare issues in the community.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **Connect resources** from local colleges or free clinics to the community by reaching out to the healthcare and education communities. Oftentimes, these organizations may be able to offer free health screenings in the community.
- **Look inward** to the medical professionals in your church who may be able to volunteer their time or expertise.
- **Mental health** is just as important as physical health. Counselors and other mental health professionals can be vital to GCCD programs and may be able to assist with one-on-one counseling, group meetings, or educational classes.

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- **Christ Community Health Fellowship:** <https://www.cchf.org/> Christian Community Health Fellowship is a community of Christian healthcare professionals who are committed to living out the gospel through healthcare among the poor.
- *Just Medicine: A Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care* by Dayna Bowen Matthew (NYU Press 2015)
- *The American maternal mortality crisis: The role of racism and bias* by Sharon Worcester: <https://www.mdedge.com/obgyn/article/221705/obstetrics/american-maternal-mortality-crisis-role-racism-and-bias?fbclid=IwAR0Ht-t06MrttyBasx2dISV-Ful7KD8gGXzYMnygg8hxtrm4Jrq8pAD7I4I>

Mercy Ministries

BIG PICTURE: Mercy ministries are important and helpful for making an initial connection or addressing a crisis situation. However, these initiatives should be approached with caution. Sometimes mercy

ministries make us feel good, but it is not about you and how you feel. Long-term development is more sustainable and more helpful to individuals and communities.

Know When to Apply Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development.

Think about the following two people: a homeless person standing on a street corner and a person whose house has just been destroyed by a tsunami. On the surface the two people are the same: they both lack adequate shelter. But the underlying conditions are quite different, aren't they? The homeless person on the street corner is in a chronic state of poverty, while the victim of the tsunami is experiencing homelessness due to an immediate crisis. And because the underlying conditions are different, the church's response should be different.

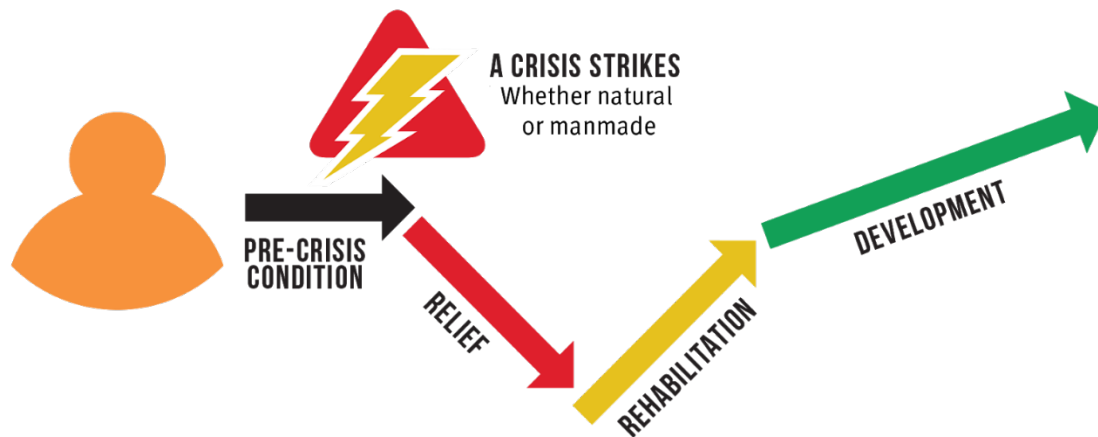
As depicted in the figure below, there are three broad categories of poverty alleviation, and the one we should use depends upon the underlying cause of the poverty:

- **Relief**, which is often called "mercy ministry," is the urgent and temporary provision of emergency aid to reduce immediate suffering from a natural or man-made crisis. In relief work, a provider does things "to" or "for" recipients to "stop the bleeding." The parable of the Good Samaritan is an example of relief work.
- **Rehabilitation** is an effort to restore people back to the positive features of their pre-crisis condition after the initial bleeding has stopped. Rehabilitation starts to move from "doing to" or "doing for" to "doing with," as people are now able to start contributing to their own recovery as the crisis is over.
- **Development** is walking with people across time in ways that move all the people involved--both the "helpers" and the "helped"--to achieving higher levels of human flourishing than they've experienced before. Development avoids "doing to or for" and focuses on "doing with."

Note that not every individual will need to go through all three phases. Most poor people are in a chronic state of poverty; they are not in a crisis, and they are not helpless. So they are capable of contributing to their own improvement. As a result, most poor people need development, not relief or rehabilitation. The biggest mistake that churches make in poverty alleviation is doing relief in situations that call for development, a mistake that can do considerable harm by creating unhealthy dependencies.. So it is crucial that we diagnose the situation correctly..

This section adapted from "Not All Poverty is Created Equal," Chapter 4 in *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself* (Moody Publishers 2012), pp. 99-116, by Corbett and Fikkert.

Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development



Adapted from Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself*, 2012 (Chicago: Moody Publishers), 100. Used by permission of the Chalmers Center.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Throughout this document, Bob Lupton and Brian Fikkert have provided many resources for us to consider in regard to development strategies. Please refer back to these **resources**, especially **articles** in the opening of this material.
- Mercy ministry is the **entry point**. Don't get stuck here!
- Don't do for people what **they can do for themselves**.
- Making the right **diagnosis** is key to addressing the issue in a way that is sustainable long-term.
- Start by focusing on people's **assets**, not on their **needs**.
- GCCD is **decades-long** work, **not days-long** work. Long-term commitment to God-given dignity affirming relationships is critical to this work.

RESOURCE ESSENTIALS:

- *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* by Dr. Ruby K. Payne (aha! Process 2005)
- *Helping without Hurting in Benevolence*, a book by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert (Moody 2015) and an online course at the Chalmers Center <https://chalmers.org/product/hwh-benevolence-course/>
- *Ministries of Mercy: The Call of the Jericho Road* by Timothy Keller (P&R Publishing 1997)
- "Not All Poverty is Created Equal," Chapter 4 in *When Helping Hurts* by Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett (Moody 2012), Expanded Edition, pp. 98-116.

FAILURE LESSONS

Every one of our GCCD team (including seasoned practitioners, authors, pastors, residents) have examples in our journeys about failures. Wrong ideas, poor execution, cultural missteps, or Satan's attacks may result in failures. But take heart! Hear King David's encouragement to remember the Lord's

benefits - His presence, His power, His Love, and His Grace. Sin is not found in sincere attempts that fail, but in not reaching out to those in the margin, not entering into their trials, or not sharing your bestowed gifts.

So... GO!

This compilation is intended to raise awareness, to share values, and to reduce missteps, but “right” is often defined by your community, your neighbors, and your unique environment. Communicate, build a vision, lean on the body of Christ, and attempt as many good ideas as possible. Start small and don’t be afraid to change course as you learn. Celebrate the deep learning that can only come from good, but failed, attempts. Then, build resources around the ones where the Holy Spirit is moving! And, share what you have learned with others. For in the trying, the persevering, and in the failures, you will find your “well done”.

For more on failure lessons, read *Failing with God* by Bob Lupton.

APPENDIX A

Ministry to Marginalized Peoples Annual Reporting

As Wesleyan Methodists, we are called to both deep personal discipleship and deep service in the community to those who are poor and marginalized. Serving, just like accountable discipleship sprouting from a personal relationship with Jesus, is an integral part of our faith (James 2:14-17). Effective ministry to marginalized people brings the Gospel of Jesus and the new abundant life through true community with other believers. These results are difficult to measure, but ultimately are the real fruit of transformed lives. Yet, ministry to marginalized people, while often grounded in similar principles of relationship, wholeness through Jesus, and abundant life within a community of believers, often presents unique challenges which require intentionality, and the local church can benefit from the wisdom of those with ministry experience in these areas. We look to Jesus, the early church, and John Wesley as our examples in the ways they sought to serve those who were often overlooked.

The purpose of annual reporting is to encourage effective ministry. As such, reporting will involve true heart-felt evaluation with the purpose of honestly assessing the effectiveness of our ministry to marginalized peoples and, more importantly, inspiring even more effective ministry. Out of that evaluation, each church will develop metrics that will reflect the outcomes that each church is being led to produce. An excellent resource for developing more external, people-oriented, kingdom metrics is *Missional Renaissance* by Reggie McNeal.

We recommend using a quadrennium system of evaluation, using each of the four years to do deeper evaluation of ministry in four areas (1) material poverty/community development, (2) brokenness including addictions, (3) racial/ethnic issues, including racial justice, immigrants and refugees, and (4) individuals with disabilities. Each church may choose which of the areas they evaluate each year and while a church may choose to repeat an area in lieu of covering all four areas each quadrennium, we recommend that no more than 7 years pass between evaluations of effectiveness in any one area. The annual reporting will consist of answering the following five questions:

1. Which of the four areas did you evaluate?
2. Did you have the necessary resources to do a good evaluation? If not, what would be helpful resources that could be provided through either the Annual Conference or the General church?
3. Did you find an especially good resource in your evaluation that might be of interest to your Annual Conference or the General Church? Please share that resource with your Annual Conference.
4. Were you able to identify opportunities for even better ministry and create a plan for carrying those opportunities to fruition?
5. What resources do you need to carry out that plan that are not currently available to you, but might be available through either the Annual Conference or the General church?

The church does not have to share the evaluation results nor the plan unless you believe it would be helpful for the Annual Conference or other churches.

Guidance for Annual Reporting in Each Area of Marginalized Peoples

Material Poverty/Community Development Evaluation:

1. **Key Question: Is this local church a place where people struggling in material poverty are welcome, included, and finding abundant life and wholeness through Jesus Christ?**
2. Study the General Church Resource on Material Poverty to learn the key principles, initial steps to transform ministry, and resources for more effective ministry.
3. Study the General Church Resource on Gospel-centered Community Development.
4. List each ministry to those in material poverty. Is this ministry primarily relief (giving resources in time of disaster), rehabilitation (restoring a family to a pre-disaster condition), or development/empowerment (walking alongside people as they envision and make positive change in their own lives)? If any ministries are relief, is the person receiving the help really in a time of disaster?
5. What is our process or plan to more effectively bring those struggling with material poverty into personal relationship with Jesus, discipleship towards abundant life and community within the body of our church? (e.g. Can we add a relational component to an existing ministry to begin to make it more developmental?)
6. Is God calling our church to more extensive community development?
7. Develop metrics to be used internally by Missions and church leadership to measure the effectiveness of your ministry with people in material poverty. Remember that deep relationships across economic groups, abundant life, life change, and true community are the fruit of effective ministry; find metrics that can reflect those results.
8. Annually evaluate the metrics to re-focus your efforts.

Brokenness Evaluation, Including Addictions:

1. **Key Question: Is this local church a place where people are able to confess brokenness, including addictions, find healing through Jesus Christ and encounter supportive community?**
2. Study the General Church Resource on Addictions to learn the key principles of effective ministry.
3. How often is the subject of addiction a part of a single sermon or series or discipleship class?
4. What is our process or plan to bring more visibility and more healing to the issues of addictions?
5. How could our small groups/classes/bands be encouraged to share more deeply in order to help people struggling with addictions receive wholeness and support?
6. Develop metrics to be used internally by Recovery and church leadership to measure the effectiveness of your ministry for brokenness. Remember that recovery, healing from the brokenness, new abundant life and healthier lifestyles are the fruit of effective ministry.
7. Annually evaluate the metrics to re-focus your efforts.

Racial/Ethnic Issues, Including Immigrants and Refugees Evaluation:

1. **Key Questions: Is this local church reflective of the local community in terms of racial and ethnic makeup? Is this church a welcoming place for the “stranger”, the immigrant or refugee or a person not of the predominant ethnic majority in the area?**
2. If your local church body is not reflective of the local community in terms of racial and ethnic makeup and/or if your local church body does not contain immigrants/refugees in proportion to

your local community, please study the General Church Resource on Immigrants and Refugees and the General Church Resource on Racial Justice issues.

3. If you are not sure of your local demographics, contact your local government to ask for demographic information. Open source demographic data for American churches is available at the US Census site [census.gov](https://www.census.gov). Many Annual Conferences may also have a subscription to [missioninsite.com](https://www.missioninsite.com) which combines demographic information from many sources in ways helpful to faith-based organizations.
4. What is our process or plan to make our church more welcoming and more reflective of the local community, racially and ethnically?
5. What is our process or plan to make our church more welcoming to the “stranger”, the immigrants and refugees in our midst?
6. Develop metrics to be used internally by staff and church leadership to measure the effectiveness of your ministry for reaching all ethnic and racial groups in your community. It is ideal when the whole body of Christ ethnically and racially in a community is reflected in a church’s attenders and leaders.
7. Annually evaluate the metrics to re-focus your efforts.

People With Disabilities Evaluation:

1. **Key Question: Is this local church a place where people with disabilities are finding true community and support?**
2. Please study the General Church Resource on Disabled/Differently Abled Individuals.
3. What is our census of disabled members and attenders?
4. What are the physical barriers to greater inclusion?
5. What are the social barriers to greater inclusion?
6. Develop metrics to be used internally by church leadership to measure the accessibility of your church to persons with disabilities.
7. Annually evaluate the metrics to re-focus your efforts.
8. Use the following accessibility audit questions.

WORLD-WIDE ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

1. Is the main entrance of the church accessible to people who are physically disabled (on walkers, canes, crutches, wheelchairs)?
2. If not, is there an entrance to the church which is accessible to people who are physically disabled and is that entrance well marked?
3. If people drive to the church, are there designated parking places for those with disabilities close to the entrance that permit direct access to an accessible entrance?
4. Are church hallways and all principle meeting rooms of the church accessible to people who are physically disabled (clear hallways, elevators/lifts available if there are multiple floors in the church)?
5. Are microphones or other voice enhancement used so that people with hearing issues can participate in the worship?
6. Is there adequate lighting and/or large print/braille versions of worship materials available so those with sight disabilities are able to participate in worship?

7. Is the church welcoming to people with disabilities? If not, how could the congregation become more welcoming?
8. Are people with disabilities able to participate in leadership within the church, serving on committees, boards or in worship roles?
9. Are people with disabilities able to participate in accountable discipleship small-group meetings as part of the church?
10. Are children with disabilities able to participate in children's ministry?
11. Are service dogs permitted within the church, including the sanctuary?
12. When communion is offered, are there gluten-free options, if gluten sensitivity is a problem in your geographical area?
13. When food is offered, are special dietary needs of the attenders considered?

Note: American churches are subject to the American Disabilities Act. Recommended practices and a more thorough audit in accordance with ADA is found at this link

https://www.umi.org/files/tables/content/102729/fields/files/18ce6813feac4ce2bbb8e3342af05d60/accessibility_audit_fillable+rev_nov_2013+pdf_1.pdf

Jump Start – Providing Data

For churches willing to invest in asset mapping (highly recommended!), a great resource is "The Power of Asset Mapping" by Luther K. Snow.

In order to further assist the local church in ministry as we build our new fellowship, we are also recommending the Global Methodist Church assist local regions / conferences in mapping the needs and assets of their communities and of their churches within the first three years of the establishment of the Global Methodist Church.

The meta-analysis of the community would cover the following types of information³³:

- Demographic Data and Trends
- Population Trends
- Health and Access to Health Care
- Economic Trends / Employment
- Housing
- Access to Food
- Access to Clean Water / Air
- Crime / Profile of Prison Population
- Education
- Key Issues Identified as Challenges for the Area

³³ Similar to this level of information:

<https://cobbfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Cobb-Human-Services-Needs-Assessment-and-Asset-Mapping-REPORT-1.pdf#page=10&zoom=auto,-79,16>

- Asset Mapping / Government and Nonprofit Landscape and Mapping
- Asset Mapping / Church Ministry Landscape and Mapping
- Opportunities for Impact

The following are examples of what could be included in asset-mapping in the local church:

- What gifts and resources are in your church?
- What needs are those in your congregation aware of?
- What need are those in your congregation best positioned to address?
- What types of ministries might your church consider establishing?
- What are the types of needs which your church cannot address?
- The people who might be the best fit for various volunteer or staff positions.

We recommend that local churches gather with those in their region to review this meta-analysis every seven years, to coincide with a review of the four areas of ministry to those in the margins as noted above.

Appendix B Contributors

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