

Missional Community Transformation

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The Little Ministry that Could: Building Something from (Almost) Nothing

What is a missional community? It means taking the *whole gospel* to the *whole world*.

25 years ago our church hit bottom. When we finally found ourselves with some surplus cash, we did a crazy thing: we gave the money away.

Last year we had over 6,000 volunteers in ministries to foster children, military families and more. Mercy ministry is 25% of our total church budget in addition to 3.8 million raised.

What we have learned:

1. The Funnel Strategy for Volunteers. At the bottom is the core leadership who carry the ministry on their backs. In the middle are your good, faithful volunteers who always show up. The wide end is the mass of people. We work hard to get people into wide end of the funnel. "Come and see and meet God." We present it as an adventure. If you need 100 core leaders to make ministry work, you need 300 regular volunteers, which means you need to present opportunity to 500 people. Once they get inside door, help them with next steps. Tell stories in thank-you letters, encourage them and present further opportunities.
2. Relationships Count. It always makes the difference. Relationships are always a two-way street. Remember the homeless man, how he grew and what he taught us. We need to hook people up with mentors. We need to realize that we need the poor *more* than they need us. They have so much to teach us.
3. Invest in Volunteers. Serving changes peoples' lives. We need to let them see the impact they're making on the community. People don't generally waste their time, so they need to see the difference they make.

Stacy Spencer, New Directions, Memphis, TN (www.n2newdirection.org)

Transforming the Hood for Good

When I think of community transformation, I think of the story of Nehemiah.

What keeps you awake at night? That is your calling. If you're not weeping over your city, then you haven't been called there.

Nehemiah's hood was in a downward spiral. So Nehemiah began to fast and pray.

If you want God to use you, start praying and ask God what he wants you to do.

After praying, we saw our church was to be oasis of hope in our community.

In many churches, we put up gates to keep the people out.

When you serve your community, the community will look out for you.

They become your greatest disciples. People are transformed.

You must have a *plan* when you approach marketplace business leaders for donations.

If you have a strategy on paper, they will take you more seriously.

Nehemiah got permission from the king to go back to Jerusalem, then went to look at it at night.

You need to have night vision when you are looking for the problems and challenges.

Be careful who you take with you. Nehemiah got the right people to help him.

You must choose carefully. When you take a stand for the community, not everyone will like it. Get ready for spiritual warfare.

Take your weapon in one hand and a tool in the other—the Bible in one hand and tool in the other.

Our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual.