

More than 3 R's: Practicing Community Development in Beaver Falls
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It was nearly 15 years ago that I was introduced to the work of John Perkins and the CCDA (Christian Community Development Association) for the first time. I was a sophomore at Northwestern College preparing for my first Spring Break Service Project in New Orleans. Twenty-five students and two staff persons from Iowa would head down to The “Big Easy” to encounter the inner city, most of us for the first time. During the week, we would assist an afterschool program, play with kids at a nearby housing project and evangelize on Bourbon Street at night. One evening, as our group met in the weeks and months prior to our “All-for-Jesus Spring Break Event”, we were handed a copied chapter from *More than Equals*, a book co-authored by Spencer Perkins and Chris Rice.

This chapter, entitled “Who is my Neighbor?” challenged us to recognize the racial issues presented in the “Parable of the Good Samaritan” and to witness the “whole” gospel by going beyond our comfort zones and loving our neighbors of a different race (Perkins, et al, 1993). A city that is primarily African-American, New Orleans was a good place for us to try out our new convictions. At the after-school program we loved our new neighbors by playing basketball, cleaning, and helping kids with homework. At the housing project, we loved our neighbors by jumping rope, drawing with chalk and letting the girls brush and braid our soft blonde hair. At night, we loved our neighbors boldly by carrying a cross to Bourbon Street and handing out tracts pointing the way to salvation through Christ (in four easy steps).

As I reflect back on my first Spring Service Project, I’m haunted by our ignorance, arrogance and shallow attempt to really love the inner-city folks of New Orleans. Though this trip opened the door to my interest in urban community development, these seven days, in all honesty, were not about loving our neighbors, as much as we tried, but rather self-gratifying service that became a context for spiritual formation, group bonding, and plenty of inside jokes and other sorts of group escapades. It took several more trips to New Orleans, Jackson, Mendenhall and Bayou La Batre (AL) before the 3 R’s of community development (the original agenda of the CCDA) really began to sink in and become central to my life and work.

The philosophy of Christian Community Development evolved from the ministry of Dr. John and Mrs. Vera Mae Perkins after years of living and working among the poor in rural Mississippi. Their story is, in fact, a heroic story of faith, conviction, obedience and prophecy. Having been raised in a family of bootleggers and sharecroppers in Mississippi, there was no doubt in John’s mind as to his status as a poor black man. After his brother returned

from World War II, John watched him bleed to death when a deputy marshal shot him for arguing with his girlfriend in the public street. John and Vera Mae had had enough and ventured to California where they were able to work and live comfortably. In California, their son Spencer attended a back yard Bible Club and insisted that his parents join him in his newly discovered knowledge of Jesus. John was captured by the Gospel, disciplined in the church, and began ministering to prisoners. Soon, however, he felt called back to Mississippi to “identity with my people there, and to help them break the cycle of despair” (Perkins, 1976, p. 77). The Perkins moved back to Mississippi, the place that had once robbed them of dignity, to begin their ministry. Their work and ongoing commitment to the poor in Mississippi would later become the model to many CCDA organizations, a movement that has extended across multiple decades and continents.

The central principles that form the core of CCDA philosophy include 3 R’s: relocation, reconciliation, and redistribution. First, relocation is premised on the Biblical concept of incarnation. Perkins states, “not only did God relocate among us by taking the form of a man, but when a fellowship of believers relocates into a community, Christ incarnate invades that community” (Perkins, 1976, p. 88). Further, Perkins challenges suburban folks to reconsider materialism and our desire for comfort and safety in order to meet the needs of the inner city. The underlying claim is that only when the issues and needs of the poor become our own, can we work together towards problem solving and restoration.

Second, Christian Community Development is concerned with reconciliation – reconciling people to God and bringing them into a church fellowship (Godon, n.d.). Surely, the gospel is holistic and involves the spiritual as well as physical needs of a community. CCDA philosophy seeks to reconcile broken relationships, particularly related to race and class. The movement recognizes the task of bringing all races and cultures into one worshipping body of Christ.

Finally, as Christians begin to share life and faith with the poor, redistribution is the natural result. Skills, resources, and creative solutions will be applied to problems and invested in the poor community. As momentum builds and resources become accessible and mobilized, community members can be empowered to work toward the betterment of their neighborhoods.

While these “3 R’s” are central to Perkin’s work and form the foundation of CCDA philosophy, five more components have been added. These include leadership development, listening to the community, connecting to the local church, using a holistic approach, and empowerment. These defining principles steer grassroots, community-

based ministries in hundreds of communities and cities across the world. When these efforts are directed by those who have made these communities their own, according to Wayne Gordon (n.d.), current CCDA President, they “are the most effective agents for healing of the poor” (p. 7).

Perhaps one of the most well known CCDA ministries is Mission Year, a one-year urban ministry program that seeks to serve people in need and create community (Mission Year, 2014). Mission Year volunteers, typically young people, commit one year to volunteering, worshiping and loving their neighbors in one of five cities: Houston, Atlanta, Oakland, Chicago, or Philadelphia. The program, according to their website, deeply impacts communities and helps members to catch a deeper vision of what the kingdom of God is like (Mission Year, 2014).

Trails Ministry is a second example of an agency seeking to follow CCDA principles. Trails Ministry is located in my own hometown of Beaver Falls, PA. The organization embraces a holistic, faith-based approach to assisting those who have been impacted by incarceration (TRAILS Ministry, 2014). For Beaver Falls, the work of Trails Ministry is particularly significant since a number of residents are in prison or have a family member in prison. The organization facilitates communication between the incarcerated and their families, aftercare, and projects like Angel Tree, an effort to coordinate gifts to children of the incarcerated at Christmas.

As I have seen the work of Trails and studied urban Community Development, I am convinced that CCDA principles and the organizations that facilitate these principles are surely solving community problems and pointing to the Kingdom of God. It is my deep concern, however, that these CCDA principles, while powerful agents of hope and change, fall short of sustainable urban transformation and neglect to address underlying values of good place-making. This conviction has compelled me to re-examine our approach and adjust the core beliefs that drive our work. Imagining “the Kingdom of God in Beaver Falls as it is in heaven” may include the 3 R’s of Christian Community Development, but surely extends much beyond them as well.

Deep change or sustainable community development is rooted in a detailed knowledge, reciprocal relationship, sense of obligation, gratitude, and membership in a particular place. Though problem solving will undoubtedly be woven into this commitment to the places we live, it cannot be the driving force of our effort in any community. We cannot proclaim dignity or truly recognize assets if we only see our neighborhoods and cities as problems to be solved rather than gifts to be received. Place attachments, rootedness, relationship, and a sense of belonging or familiarity, each wrapped up in local, particular, named places, nurture us toward a fuller sense of our

own humanness. Perhaps, as people concerned with healthy communities, we ought to first recognize our need to be placed before simply entering with a sort of problem-solving agenda.

Power

To receive a place, marked by the characteristics noted above, is to redefine power. We often define power in terms of influence, ability, capacity or willingness to act. While working toward the betterment of any community, the misuse of power is an ongoing risk. Top-down government intervention or market incentives that ignore local needs or neglect to recognize the dignity of residents continually threaten marginal communities. Contrarily, good community development uses power to empower those on the margins who seldom have a voice. It is to train up leaders, provide access to resources, and stir energy toward the kind of change most needed and desired.

However, even this approach, using power to empower others, involves potential threats. Often, according to author Christine Pohl, those who have never experienced marginality often find it easier to give than to receive. Though they appear to be generous, they reinforce existing patterns of status and wealth while avoiding questions about the distribution of power and resources: “recipients of such ‘hospitality’ thus become guests in their own house” (Pohl, 1999, p. 119). To empower is to recognize the gifts and value of another. Until we’re willing to receive and acknowledge these gifts, a new sense of empowerment or dignity cannot be realized.

To enter a community and presume to know it as a set of problems to be solved, before receiving it with gratitude, is to act with assumptions and ignorance. For example, in my own community of Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, high energy college students and others concerned with the health of our city brainstorm and strategize new initiatives that may bring vibrancy or resources to residents. For most, the community is marked by poverty, vacant storefronts, dilapidated homes, drugs, and other social problems. Rarely do these folks investigate mill culture, community narratives, issues of identity, environmental questions, emotional attachments, or the events surrounding economic collapse. Their problem solving approach assumes a particular way of life that ought to be desired by any community – new stores, nice houses, more money. Rather than understanding or appreciating underlying values, gifts, or relationships, it categorizes people based on income, housing quality, or education. Further, while problem-solvers recognize struggling schools, joblessness and drugs, they neglect to see the ways in which a rich social fabric nurtures and provides a network of relationships, sense of belonging and familiarity, safety, and other measures connectedness. An inability to recognize the ways in which places, even distressed

communities, provide meaning keeps these folks from experiencing the ways in which Beaver Falls can nurture them toward a more full sense of community life. To see it only as a problem is to arrogantly disregard the meanings and identity that emerge from the places we live.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009), a storyteller from Nigeria, depicts this narrow sightedness in her “Ted Talk” entitled “The Danger of a Single Story”. The speaker proposes that when only one story is told about a people or a place, it is impossible for us to see them as anything beyond this single story. Consequently, when we only know a place by its economy and “ugliness”, we withhold any connection as “human equals” and neglect to recognize the ways in which we may experience similarities. Further, Adichie (2009) contends that the danger of the single story must reveal issues of power: “Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person but to make it the definitive story of that person.” The consequence of the single story is that it robs people of dignity, makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult and emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar (Adichie, 2009).

The default position held by most in regards to Beaver Falls is a description of poverty, dilapidated houses, drug problems and joblessness, which naturally evokes emotions - disdain for some; compassion from others. I must ask, however, what if there is more to the story? What if, instead of seeing a distressed community, we also saw strong family ties, walkable streets, good design, neighborliness, deep attachments to place, winning sports teams, and willing residents who are ready and interested in working toward change? As people concerned about community development, dignity and justice, it seems critical that we keep from defining our places by the single story.

Stories matter; they have been used to oppress and damage but also to empower and to humanize. Adichie (2009) states: “Stories can break the dignity of a people but stories can also repair that broken dignity”. The narratives that define any place, but also this particular place, Beaver Falls, must be amended. If our college students and others interested in community projects would hear the many stories of hope, beauty, commitment, investment and neighborliness perhaps their approach and even their ability to receive such a place would change from problem solving to gratitude.

Returning to Pohl’s (1999) study of Christian hospitality, the author insists that gifts do not flow in one direction only; rather, hospitality is a “two-way street” (p. 72). If practicing hospitality is an appropriate use of power and is rooted in a deep sense of gratitude, according to the author, it seems necessary that practitioners recognize their own needs, frailties, and dependence on others. (Pohl, 1999, p. 72). We practice hospitality and

empowerment because we too are in need; “we walk the same pilgrimage that many of these people walk, just in a different format (Pohl, 1999, p. 72).

Diversity

In the CCDA literature, Perkin’s second “R” grips me with particular significance. Surely, reconciliation of people to God and to one another is at the heart of the gospel. Further, the multicultural church, rather than a predominantly white, black, Asian or Latino church is a more full expression of the body of Christ. The book of Revelation reminds us of this ultimate vision for diversity: “...I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the lamb (Revelation 7:9). The CCDA movement gets this and points to healing and collaboration across racial, ethnic and economic barriers.

Soong Chan Rah (2009), author of *The Next Evangelism*, seems to push us even farther. While healing relationships, deep understanding, combined worship and collaboration are a start, Rah proposes that unless we hear and embrace the gospel from various culture groups, our gospel remains incomplete. In his text, Rah (2009) uses Walter Brueggemann’s explanation of the “Theology of Suffering and the Theology of Celebration” which point us toward a multicultural understanding of the gospel. Here, Brueggemann addresses the tension between a theology of blessing or celebration for the well-off and a theology of salvation or suffering for the precarious have-nots (Rah, 2009, p. 146). This gap in perceptions is largely based upon experience, status and power. Power, often represented by mobility and privilege, can produce gestures of paternalism and create divisions in place of solidarity, which always requires sacrifice and the giving-up of power.

Giving-up power may require mainstream evangelical churches to set aside certain interpretations or perceptions in order to hear the gospel from a new angle – the angle of various culture groups. Rah (2009) states: “if we are to be liberated from the Western, white captivity of the church, we need to begin learning the stories of the have-nots and learn from those who dwell in the theology of suffering” (p. 155). Only when our gospel is large enough to address experiences of poverty, oppression, suffering, and exclusion as well as embrace the worship styles, perceptions and interpretations of every nation and culture, will we produce a fair expression of Christ’s church. This, as stated earlier in the paper, requires an examination of power and the stories we tell that necessarily define and limit or welcome and embrace.

In my introduction, I referenced the “Parable of the Good Samaritan” and the comments I read regarding this scripture passage. *More than Equals*, by Spencer Perkins and Chris Rice (1993), challenges readers to embrace the whole gospel by loving our neighbors of a different race. While I would not disagree, our commonly held notions of this challenge simply do not go far enough. It is not enough to serve, live among, or even enjoy folks from another culture group. We, in fact, need these folks – whether black, white, Latino, Asian, wealthy or poor - to inform our understanding and interpretation of the gospel. We remain incomplete until we do.

Several weeks ago, while meeting with a college student at a local coffee shop, she began connecting our conversation to her experience in Haiti where her own understanding of the “Parable of the Good Samaritan” was turned upside-down. As white, mainstream evangelicals, we have learned to read the parable and question what kind of neighbor we ought to be. Will we ignore the needs of those who suffer or will we have compassion and intervene? While in Haiti, this student was struck by the irrelevance of this question in that place since those she met identified more with the one in the parable who was attacked by robbers. Further, near the end of the passage, Jesus asks, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor...” and then of course Jesus commands, “Go and do likewise.” While in Haiti, my student heard a new interpretation: “Go and be likewise.” Positioning themselves as the one attacked, and recognizing their humble state, the Haitians my student encountered were compelled to rely solely on the one who will carry them to salvation. This alternative interpretation encourages those of us who have only known a white, evangelical, mainstream perspective to pause and consider God’s word from a new angle. Whether or not it reflects theological accuracy, it reveals the suffering of those who find themselves beaten up by their circumstances. The Haitians’ posture and their faith in the one who will bring salvation can inform our own desperate need for a savior. Surely, without the Haitians’ contribution and story, our understanding remains incomplete.

Membership

Good community development, rooted in gratitude and place-making, must be sustained by membership. Public intellectual, Wendell Berry, one of my favorite authors, presents an ongoing case for careful stewardship of place, land, and community. His novels, poetry and essays portray the beauty of a bounded life.

Berry’s novels are set in the small town of Port William, where characters participate in the every day life of farming the land, maintaining their place, engaging relationships and embracing tradition. The Port William

stories reveal Berry's posture toward the material, that in these very concrete physical realities, we encounter the mysteries and beauty and wholeness of our health and humanity. To participate in the membership of these very real, concrete places is both limiting and liberating. Berry depicts membership as people "joined to the land by work" (Berry, 2002, p. 189). Further, the author states:

"For good farming to last, it must occur in a good farming community – that is, a neighborhood of people who know each other, who understand their mutual dependences, and who place proper value on good farming. In its cultural aspect, the community is an order of memories preserved consciously in instructions, songs, and stories, and both consciously and unconsciously in *ways*. A healthy culture holds preserving knowledge in *place* for a *long* time. That is, the essential wisdom accumulates in the community much as fertility builds the soil" (Berry, 2002, p. 189).

While Berry primarily addresses agriculture and rural community, it seems these underlying habits, practices, and values ought to shape our commitments to urban life as well. It seems essential that, beyond problemsolving, we nurture a culture, narrative and identity that is rooted in reciprocal relationships, meaningful work, and preserving memories. These membership practices cannot be initiated from the outside by those who "relocate" to such a place. They must be learned, appreciated, and internalized over time by those of us who choose to make our homes among new neighbors. Surely, this sort of membership necessarily requires acts of submission – an uncomfortable word for most.

In an online blog, Matt McCullough (2013) describes Berry's novels as illustrations of "liberating submission" that are "always involved with membership". The author portrays what it means to belong to a community – giving themselves wholly to its health, for better or worse: "It is a submission of yourself—your identity, your interests, your ambitions—to the needs of those to whom you're bound" (McCullough, 2013). Berry's characters, in all their ups and downs, embrace their identity and membership in Port William and all the commitments these reflect – to the people, the land, its history, and the mysteries of God at work in their place.

What if community development in the city took the same approach? How could we not just develop programs and empower residents toward bettering their communities, but embrace a way of life that reflects this sort of submission to our neighbors, friends, and colleagues? If we could allow our place and our work to get inside us, change us and alter our perspective, understanding, and even who we say we are, perhaps our commitments would be deep enough to generate lasting health.

Imaginative Redevelopment

A community development approach that is shaped by membership would surely see far beyond programs or initiatives that simply provide relief or resource to the urban poor. Sustainable development will require a careful study of city design, self-efficacy, and social fabric. Coupled with a detailed knowledge of place and community narratives, analyzing these redevelopment possibilities can serve as a road map for new initiatives that reflect a deep commitment to a particular place and its people.

If “relief” programs, such as soup kitchens and homeless shelters, serve the immediate needs of the poor, “resource” programs go further to empower the poor. These efforts include things like aftercare for those re-entering the community after incarceration, job-training, and community gardens. Rarely, however, do community ministries seek to transform the underlying culture, identity, narrative or values that shape life in a particular place. The fundamental issues addressed by those committed to redevelopment will allow communities to move beyond problem solving toward a renewed perspective and appreciation for urban life.

First, while it is clear that empowering individuals and communities toward their own betterment is more appropriate than utilizing government initiatives or market incentives. Empowerment, it seems, is dependent upon a narrative with room to imagine otherwise. Often, distressed communities are portrayed as undesirable places to live and those who live there may internalize these labels or stereotypes. Place-identity theory claims that part of who we are is wrapped-up in where we are. Further, our environments and community narratives relay messages in regards to identity and self-worth. The narratives that are used to describe where we live and who we are may need to be re-written in order for empowerment to take root. For example, in Beaver Falls the commonly held narrative is “We were once a thriving steel town and the streets were full of shops, restaurants and theatres; everyone had a job. And now, it’s all gone; we’re no longer much of anything.” Unless this underlying narrative and psychology is addressed, strategies to empower individuals or improve the community will be empty or short-lived.

Embracing an alternative narrative and inviting newness, according to the Walter Brueggemann (2001) involves deliberative criticism, grief, and hopeful imagination. Brueggemann is a distinguished Biblical scholar who provides an interpretation of the Old Testament that can direct our own understanding of the world, our identity as God’s people, and God’s intervening power that rescues the oppressed. In *The Prophetic Imagination*, Brueggemann (2001) describes how the Israelites (or we) are often crippled by tolerance or numbed by overwhelming and complex

hardship. Until those who have been oppressed can name that which is wrong, such as systemic inequality or deception, they remain trapped in the current narratives that keep them from moving beyond their circumstances. Then, allowing folks to grieve and come to grips with the wrong that has been done is essential in order to move past and imagine something new. Finally, as folks deal truthfully with current realities, perhaps they can be encouraged to think beyond; to creatively imagine what ought to be in regards to new possibilities, opportunities, and desires. To empower is to invite folks out of their own brokenness and into a narrative with room for God's power to intervene and bring newness. When this new understanding is embraced, our identities change from "not much of anything" to unending potential.

Second, urban redevelopment must consider principles of design. Certainly, community health is deeply intertwined with the accessibility, beauty, and social interaction within the built environment. Eric Jacobsen (2012), in *The Space Between*, states, "When their habitats are lacking in certain key characteristics, humans tend to languish; and when habitats are in an optimal state, they tend to thrive. One of the benefits of paying attention to the built environment is that it can help us think through settings that support human thriving" (p. 14). While many of our more recent urban neighborhoods have been designed to promote values of efficiency, convenience, mobility, and privacy, neighborhoods that foster community health are built to sustain social fabric, mutual dependence and participation. The ability to walk to local stores, appreciate diversity, feel safe, enjoy public spaces, encounter strangers and socialize with friends will surely affect the ways in which communities and individuals flourish. It seems unreasonable to expect the urban poor to navigate their way out of poverty without a setting that points to human thriving. Without such a place, the urban poor may be empowered toward change but rarely will deep, lasting sustainable change be realized.

Next, opportunities to generate social capital must be part of any sustainable community development effort. Social capital is the value we receive from our social networks and relationships. A greater level of social interaction will undoubtedly provide various benefits, anything from acquiring jobs to borrowing tools to remaining safe. These valuable social connections are better sustained in environments that promote social capital – where familiarity, trust, sense of belonging, and mutual dependence is common. Sidewalks, local stores, and third places are ideal for generating social capital and developing a community that can benefit from networking, relationships, and neighborliness. When social capital is absent and folks remain isolated and left to individual efforts, the urban poor have little chance of escaping current circumstances.

The Common Good

At the deepest level, the work of community development requires a paradigm shift. As practitioners, we must move beyond problem solving, and even empowerment, to a total reconfiguration of the values that shape our everyday lives in the neighborhood. Unless we come to a new understanding of who we are, what matters, and what is normative or good, our efforts cannot produce deep change. These new values stem from the narratives we hold, what we believe about the world and our place within it. Social scientists, (the late) Robert Bellah (*Habits of the Heart*, 1985) and Robert Putnam (*Bowling Alone*, 2000) have expressed their deep concern that Americans are quickly losing the ability to care for the common good. Together with theologians like Brueggemann, they have challenged us to reclaim the deep resources in our religion and traditions that empower us to care for the other. Brueggemann (2010), in *The Journey to the Common Good*, provides us with a glimpse of this new and alternative narrative.

What we are witnessing in our society, according to Brueggemann (2013), is a breakdown of the common good reflected by a lack of civic engagement and civic behavior. Further, the “predatory economy” that drives our work and consumption and wellbeing puts all of the money at the top of the pyramid and robs us of dignity, freedom and the capacity to live (Brueggemann, 2013). This predatory economy convinces us that we never have enough and in order to succeed, we must get ahead of our neighbor, have more stuff, produce more, work harder, and privatize everything. This, undoubtedly leaves us exhausted, full of anxiety and without moral courage.

The alternative, perhaps, is recognizing God’s abundant provision in the desert places and receiving these gifts. Could we, along with our distressed communities, use our best energy, imagination and thinking in very specific, concrete, local ways to move out of the “predatory systems” that Brueggemann describes? I believe it will require a paradigm shift in regards to the narratives that shape us, the ultimate goals that drive us, and our commitments to our particular place and its people.

The city of Braddock, Pennsylvania may provide a powerful example of how a community, under the leadership of Mayor John Fetterman, has taken it upon themselves to re-imagine the future of their city. Devastated by the collapse of the steel industry, the community encounters abandoned properties, dilapidated buildings, and decay along with the supplemental social problems that emerge when, as Fetterman states, “you sacrifice the town on the altar of the free market” (Strand, 2009). Braddock’s response has been all but reflective of the typical

approach to redevelopment in America (Strand, 2009). While the standard response is to tear things down and start over, Fetterman envisions an approach to revitalization that honors the past while redefining the ideal: “Braddock isn’t just about renewing the community, but is about changing the fundamentals of how things work” (Strand, 2009). Instead of strip malls and cul-de-sacs, Braddock invests in urban farming, the arts, youth programs, and creative reflection. Fetterman understands the need not for ever-increasing consumption and cheap facades, but rather a community that honors the past as well as the humanity of residents. The folks in Braddock are creating a place where the common good is re-imagined in terms of preserving memory, empowering the community, and re-thinking the structures that hold us captive.

Lamppost Farm is an additional example that seeks the common good. Steve and Mel Montgomery began farming near Columbiana, Ohio in order to embrace a different and more holistic life. Along with their core partners and community members, the Montgomery Family seeks to model right relationships with God, creation, and others by “engaging in purposeful work, contagious relationships, and the celebration of ‘good, ordinary food’” (Lamppost Farm, 2014). Rather than exploiting the land and animals for the greatest return, the farm community is committed to a greater vision of health, wholeness, beauty, and mutual dependence. Not only can these underlying values shape life on the farm, they can inform those of us working toward a similar vision in the urban context.

While the Christian Community Development philosophy is a solid beginning, and points us in the right direction, it seems that our vision and commitments must exceed the 3 R’s or even 8 core principles. We must, in order to be sustainable and holistic, work toward a more full expression of God’s kingdom of abundance. This fullness necessarily includes our sense of place-identity, the built environments in which we live, and the social fabric that shapes life in a particular place. These, surely, emerge from the narratives that shape us, the values that drive us and the ultimate ends to which we strive. As followers of Christ, it is essential that we address community development with these very concrete, personal, and significant concerns and issues in mind. Perhaps, a reassessment of our approach and deepest values can move us beyond the kingdom of scarcity and more fully into God’s kingdom of abundance.

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