

It is **preventative** in that its mission or purpose is to increase the well being of individuals, as well as communities. When done well it eliminates problems before they bring tragedy to people's lives, through personal as well as community development.

- For Christians, community development is an expression of their faith in Jesus Christ. It is a faith work done in the context of community or meaningful relationships (church, family, school, work, neighborhood, etc.). It is teaching people to fish versus giving them a fish when they are in crisis and starving.
- Community development is a work of compassion - but longer term than crisis intervention or relief work.
- Community development is also a work of justice and righteousness, a commitment to the poor, oppressed and powerless, in which Christians are focused on contributing equity and empowerment while ministering to "the least of these." It is about helping individuals and social systems make "right choices" that bring a Kingdom order to our lives.
- True community development develops meaningful relationships.

It is **transformational** in that it transforms culture. It is not the faith community against culture, rather it transforms and creates culture. Community development works to improve the conditions in which we live, as well as working to the betterment of people. It looks at evil, pathology, and/or deprivation and works to eliminate these factors in partnership with those affected by these destructive forces.

- There may be other definitions of problems with their own solutions to help at risk populations and the conditions that affect them, so partnership and collaborative efforts are very important in this mission. The focus becomes common missions that unite, rather than differences that divide so people may be helped and cultures transformed.

It is **collaborative** because partnerships are essential in community development work. They are based on mutual respect so people can be honest about their differences, values, beliefs and callings.

- Community development is about reconciliation, because we often have to reconcile before we can work together.
 - There is hurt, pain, alienation and mistrust in all communities and that keeps us from working together for the greater good. This need to restore trust or reconcile is a part of community development because partnerships do not work without respect and trust. Whether reconciliation is racial, between church members or the business community, there is much hurt to be healed for true community to develop. When people humble themselves and are willing to ask for forgiveness and work through their conflicts then healthy partnerships can develop.
- Partnership is based on common purposes or missions. Resources are often lacking. So without partnerships there is little chance of bringing about transformation.

It is about **leadership** in that there is a need for leaders who are willing to serve to make their communities a better place to live. It is not about power, turf or significance, but about a servant's heart and the ability to lead. It is about leaders from all domains and sectors - the business community, the faith community and the political arenas - that make things happen together.

- Leaders help create through their visions and rally others to participate using their own gifts and callings to be a part of great works. *"Good ideas, by themselves are of little worth... these good ideas lack the mobilizing energy, motivating power, and the unifying impact of a leader,"* says Robert Lewis. Os Guinness says, *"Nothing happens without leaders."* We have to take the idea to the task and accomplish the task. Leaders are often the ones to facilitate that accomplishment. Godly or trustworthy leaders are essential to community development.
- For the Christian, community development is about living out your faith. It is the expression of your call, the good works that God calls you to do in your lifetime. *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."* *Ephesians 2:10 N.A.S.* Leaders often initiate these avenues for the expression of good works and unify people with their various gifts so God's purposes can be achieved.