

A PROMISING PARTNERSHIP ALLIANCE  
CHURCH INITATED COMMUNITY TRANSFORAMTION

During the past year Churches Together created a Research Team (CTRT) to determine what is and is not working well in efforts to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS and poverty in Africa.

In January of 2007 the Lord gave a precious gift to a world groaning as in the pains of childbirth (Roman 8:22). At that time Church Initiated Neighborhood Development – a North American Ministry - was born which combined the know-how of 6 ministry organizations. Because this approach is biblically aligned (I Corinthians 12/13) it is amazingly effective by transcending both cultural and social status barriers while providing a kingdom development ministry.

ASSUMPTIONS:

1. The book *Against All Hope – Hope for Africa* provides a easily understood and comprehensive analysis of problems in Africa and the resolution of those issues.
2. Those working without biblically based moral and ethical values fail
3. Organizations working alone providing piece-meal solutions have not been effective
4. All people groups have been created with equal potential talents.
5. Most poor people have not had the opportunity to cultivate their potential talents
6. Potential talents/assets can be cultivated cost/effectively with non formal education

ATTRIBUTES OF CHURCH INITATED NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFORMAITON

- Was crafted with the know how of 6 Christian organizations (Campus Crusade, Communities First, Disciple the Nations Alliance, Food for the Hungry, Harvest, and Lifewind)
- Is biblically aligned
  - Helps people see His abundance, His creative power, His love already at work
  - Respects, values, and builds on God’s goodness – created and placed in community
  - Creates married partnership with community for justice/worship -God’s reign
- Fits with the state of the art developmental theory
- Fits with the state of the art organizational theory
- Avoids alienating un-churched people
- Makes it easy for the un-churched person to find God
- Enables Church members to work on same side of the table with the poor as equals
- Addresses both earthly and heavenly home issues
- Energizes both church and neighborhood members.
- Assets (building blocks) come from community -transcending cultural/social status differences
- Unleashes the potential of diverse church/community members to restore the kingdom
- Transforms trashed out communities into a canopies of God’s grace
- Creates a interactive equal partnership between church and community
- Involves entire person –physical, social, spiritual, emotional all sectors
- Produces wholistic transformation in churches and individuals in neighborhood
- Helps churches which are weary/disillusioned with feeding dependency
- Produces transformation in individuals and churches
- Ideal “boot camp” for pre-qualifying North Americans for international ministry

KEY ELEMENTS

The procedure utilized in Church Initiated Neighborhood Transformation is more like scaffolding on a building than a program. This scaffolding was developed for churches to help churches to move faster and with more success. It surfaces and utilizes assets (building blocks) from the community to help them build a preferred future.

The processes recognize that people living in deteriorating neighborhoods are often functioning in a survivor's mode of existence – they can be detached/discouraged. They need realistic hope.

Church members are given a non offensive way of beginning a conversation with community people. “If God would perform a miracle in this community what would you hope it would be?” For many community people this question unleashed a number of heavy burdens about poverty, drugs, and gangs.

Church members are trained to uncover and utilize community assets. These pre-existing community assets are documented and later utilized as building blocks for preferred future. This search for assets begins with a simple but powerful way of beginning to identify assets of the hands, heart and head. Each participant list three gifts in each area.. One small group identified 38 gifts of the heart – things they really cared about. They also listed 38 gifts they could do with their hands and 40 gifts they could do with their head. It is important these gifts be documented so they can be used as building blocks of the preferred future.

The procedure uses community's assets as building blocks for the community's preferred future to *minimize cultural and social class barriers*. Even more important it enables the community to have dominion/control (Genesis 1:26) over resources. It is an effective way to change communities. *But the real desire is to enhance the giftedness and wellbeing of people.*

After the giftedness of the community members has been obtained and organized it is presented in a community meeting by a respected and gifted community leader. This is a community planning session where the community decides what their vision is and what their priorities are with all the community gifts of head, hands, and heart.

Later they select a community leader, a leadership team, and community trainers to implement their agreed to plan while church members provide encouraging relationship. When done correctly this procedure will enable the community to be transformed by means of a independent community association they have crafted and own.

But that is not all. To insure continued transformation of both the community and the church it is essential that a ongoing joint venture “marriage” exist between the community leaders and the church workers as equal partners. The community leaders can help churches to flourish by encouraging them and participating in crafting appropriate externally focused ministries/worship. The churches can help the community to flourish by encouraging them and facilitating access to pre-existing community resources while enabling them to find easy access to a heavenly eternal home.

#### This Promising Partnership Alliance

*Church Initiated Neighborhood Transformation* for North American ministry makes an ideal training program to pre-qualifying North American people for international ministries. This approach trains people to work with the international body of believers as equals while reducing both cultural and status barriers. It also helps to re-capture many of the attributes and spirit of Pentecost that is described in the bible's book of Acts.

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