

QUALITIES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHURCH-BASED COMMUNITY MINISTRY

The following dozen principles have been developed through the time-tested experience of Christian community development practitioners. They represent a blend of biblical wisdom and practical insight. These qualities describe the bigger picture of what faithful obedience to Christ's teachings and example looks like in the context of church-based community ministry.

As your church's external ministry develops, the more these qualities characterize your approach to community outreach, the more God's love and power can flow through your church's service to promote lasting, holistic change in the community. Use these touchstones to build a healthy ministry and to reassess that ministry as it develops:

1. *Servant leadership*: The church ministers *with* the community, not *to* the community, seeking the opportunity to serve as a friend rather than a hero.
2. *Asset-based*: The ministry focuses not only on the community's problems but also on its assets, affirming where God's hand is already evident and building on existing strengths.
3. *Developmental*: The ministry goes beyond meeting immediate needs to promote lasting change in individuals, neighborhoods, social systems and/or the broader culture.
4. *Participatory*: The ministry draws on the motivation, input, and involvement of those affected by the ministry (members of the community, volunteers, local nonprofits, etc.).
5. *Capacity-building*: The ministry avoids dependency by not doing what people can do for themselves, or undermining the capacity of local leaders, organizations and businesses.
6. *Relational*: Relationships are characterized by respect for the image of God in each person, affirming the dignity and equality of all people.
7. *Reconciling*: The ministry confronts prejudices, promotes restoration across social divides, and stands with those who are most vulnerable in a community.
8. *Holistic*: The ministry promotes wholeness for an individual or community across interconnected dimensions of life -- spiritual, physical, economic, emotional and relational.
9. *Redemptive*: The ministry's authority draws on Christ's victory over sin in all its forms -- including exploitation, ungodly behaviors and worldviews, and broken socio-economic structures.
10. *Discipling*: The ministry draws on and deepens the faith of volunteers, expands their understanding of God's heart for the poor and vulnerable, and energizes their worship.
11. *Spiritually nurturing*: The ministry provides opportunities for those who are spiritually hungry to encounter God's truth and grace in ways that are culturally relevant and non-coercive.
12. *Excellent*: The ministry promotes excellence and integrity in its standards, stewardship, and leadership.

Worksheet for Applying the Principles of Transformational Ministry

This tool can help you explore ways of applying a transformational dynamic to your outreach, whether you are launching a new ministry or seeking to enhance the impact of an existing program.

The first four items relate to the continuum of intervention (from relief to development). The last five represent basic principles of transformational development. The table on this page is filled in as an example.

At the top of each column, write the name of your ministry program or focus (people group, neighborhood or social concern). Then brainstorm responses for the category in each row. You don't have to incorporate every idea, but this process can help you to consider your options.

Transformational Focus <i>Through this ministry, our church can ...</i>	Ministry Example #1:	Ministry Example #2:
	<i>local elementary school</i>	<i>health care</i>
<i>Relief</i> <i>care for people's urgent needs by ...</i>	providing winter coats, school supplies	assisting with costs of urgently needed medicines
Personal development <i>help empower change in people's lives by ...</i>	offering after-school tutoring & conflict-resolution training	teaching seminars on preventing health risks through wellness lifestyle
Community development <i>strengthen the building blocks of a healthy community by ...</i>	sponsoring projects to improve school facilities and grounds	providing a same-day care clinic as a less costly alternative to the ER
Societal development <i>organize to change unfair systems by...</i>	organizing a "town meeting" on equitable public school funding	building a coalition to work toward better family insurance coverage
Relational <i>cultivate restorative relationships by ...</i>	matching at-risk kids with college-age mentors	organize peer learning / support groups on shared health concerns
Asset-based <i>build on existing strengths in the community by ...</i>	hosting an annual "thank you" banquet to encourage teachers / staff	recruiting neighborhood "grandmas" to help care for sick children
Participatory <i>community members as decision-makers by ...</i>	organizing a parent advisory team	including community health care representatives on the clinic board
Capacity-building <i>encourage people to be responsible for their lives by...</i>	supporting the local parent-teacher association	providing medical coverage incentives for healthy lifestyle
Spiritual <i>nurture the spiritual growth of those we serve by ...</i>	incorporating Bible teaching & prayer into the after-school curriculum	offering to pray with clinic patients
Discipling <i>draw on and deepen the faith of volunteers & the church by ...</i>	recruiting prayer partners for teachers / kids / mentors	weekly devotions with clinic personnel
Reconciling <i>confront prejudices and build bridges across social divides by ...</i>	teaching conflict resolution in the after-school program	training staff in cultural differences in health practices and concerns

Worksheet for Applying the Principles of Transformational Ministry

Transformational Focus <i>Through this ministry, our church can ...</i>	<i>Ministry Name or Focus Area</i>
<i>Relief</i> <i>care for people's urgent needs by ...</i>	
Personal development <i>help empower change in people's lives by ...</i>	
Community development <i>strengthen the building blocks of a healthy community by ...</i>	
Societal development <i>organize to change unfair systems by ...</i>	
Relational <i>cultivate restorative relationships by ...</i>	
Asset-based <i>build on existing strengths in the community by ...</i>	
Participatory <i>beneficiaries as decision-makers by ...</i>	
Capacity-building <i>encourage people to be responsible for their lives by...</i>	
Spiritual <i>nurture the spiritual growth of those we serve by ...</i>	
Discipling <i>draw on and deepen the faith of volunteers & the church by ...</i>	
Reconciling <i>confront prejudices and build bridges across social divides by ...</i>	