

ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LOOKING FOR AND NAMING THE GIFTS OF PEOPLE

An excerpt from 'Having Nothing, Possessing Everything' by Mike Mather, p.130-133:

Institutions and individuals who want to build on the abundance around them need to be able to **see** that abundance... When Wendell Berry was asked about what kind of economy is the best, he said **the best economy is the kingdom of God**. That isn't a capitalist economy or a socialist economy. It's an economy where attention is paid to every hair on our head, to the ways in which the flowers of the field are dressed, and to **God's abundance** in the most surprising places.

It's an **economy of attention and intention** - an economy, as in our neighborhood, where people who are discounted by the world are **seen for the gifts they bring to bear...**

Too often organizations, churches, and others in low-income neighborhoods make commitments based more on the advice of planners than on the movement of the Spirit, on the giftedness all around us. We call in the consultants to "fix us" rather than calling in our bosses or bishops to "bless us"...

Churches could lead the way in making real change.

What if, in the city, we asked our denominational leaders to come to us, **lay hands** on us and **bless us**, and thank us for keeping our commitment to stay in the city when others have fled? What if, at annual church conferences, instead of celebrating only the church that grew by the biggest number or the largest percentage, we **celebrated the faithfulness** of those congregations? What if we gave awards to congregations that, despite all that has happened around them demographically - all the shifts, the while flight, the changing economic base - have stayed in the city to witness to **God's goodness, grace, glory and gifts** in the people of God? What if we asked those congregations to **name three neighbors they wanted to celebrate** for the gifts they give in that neighborhood?

The issues our organizations and people face cannot be cured by technique (whether that technique is creating a new worship service, erecting a new building, storytelling, or establishing an economic and community development program). But **we do have the tools** we need in our own hands. They are **the tools of our faith** - the tools that brought us to the point we are today. Our primary tool is **trusting in the present abundance**, the tool that so many of us have abandoned as we have grown afraid to die - and afraid to live. I try to remember those words that appear in Scripture so often: "**Fear not.**"

"THE BIGGEST SPIRITUAL PROBLEM IS THAT THE POOR DONT BELIEVE THEY HAVE ANY GIFTS, AND THE RICH DONT BELIEVE THEY HAVE ANY NEEDS." P. 31

SIMILARLY, AND IN CONNECTION WITH THIS PROJECT... A SPIRITUAL PROBLEM IN THE CHURCH IS THAT THE GIFTS OF OUR YOUTH ARE NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY, AND THE ADULTS DO NOT BELIEVE THEY ARE MISSING OUT ON, OR HAVE ANY NEED FOR, THE GIFTS OF OUR YOUTH.

THEOLOGY OF ABUNDANCE

LOOKING FOR AND NAMING THE GIFTS OF PEOPLE

ILLUMINATION OF OUR ASSETS

1

Gather as a group in whatever way possible - in person, over Zoom, using FaceTime, etc. Get started with an ice breaker or time spent checking in with each other.

2

Establish a dedicated 'scribe' to enter names and contact information into the 'Fishing Pond' spreadsheet of all organizations, businesses, & people mentioned.

3

Start with the tool 'Illumination of Assets.' Give every person in the group their own blank worksheet. Using the Leader's Guide, work through the 'key questions.' Move slowly through the process, giving time and dialog for all three categories. Help your 'scribe' enter all the necessary information into the 'Fishing Pond' spreadsheet.

LAYERS OF KINSHIP

4

Focus on your youth and use the 'Layers of Kinship' tool, using one page per individual. Start with the gifts they named prior in step 3, on their 'Illumination of Assets' tool. Work through the 'Key Questions' on the Leader's Guide of the tool - working in order. Take time listen and ask questions - don't rush through the phases. Help your 'scribe' enter all the necessary information into the 'Fishing Pond' spreadsheet.

DISCOVERABLES

5

As a group, look over the 'Discoverables' prompts and work through the categories. Establish a 'Connector' in the group - someone who will take on the role of connecting your youth with the beneficial individuals identified in the exercises, and will champion forming connections throughout the community.

6

Pray over your youth. Celebrate the gifts and work of your youth. Plan out new ways to name and share the gifts within your youth.

7

Close out your meeting by affirming and giving thanks for the members of your team.



MATERIAL PREP:

- These Instructions
- 'Asset Based Community Development' overview
- Leader's Guides
- 6 Blank 'Illumination of Assets' for your team
- 2 Blank 'Layers of Kinship' for your youth
- Computer with 'Fishing Pond' spreadsheet
- 'Discoverables' worksheet



'IF YOU WANT TO LAY GOOD AND STRONG FOUNDATIONS, BUILD WITH WHAT IS PRESENT RATHER THAN WHAT IS NOT. SPEND TIME TO UNCOVER THE GIFTS, RESOURCES, AND SKILLS OF THOSE ALREADY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.'

ILLUMINATION OF ASSETS

Leader's Guide

This is about Listening Work

USE THE QUESTIONS FOR EACH CATEGORY
- TAKE YOUR TIME - BE CAREFUL NOT TO SKIP AHEAD -
- REPEAT QUESTIONS IF NECESSARY -

GIFTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

1

THE GIFTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

IT'S HELPFUL TO THINK OF THESE GIFTS COMING FROM **THE HAND, THE HEAD, OR THE HEART.**

GIFTS OF THE HAND - THINGS YOU DO (I.E.: PAINTING, FIXING CARS, GARDENING, MUSICAL TALENT, ATHLETICS)

GIFTS OF THE HEAD - A KNOWLEDGE NITCH (I.E.: LANGUAGES, LITERATURE, COMPUTERS)

GIFTS OF THE HEART - A PASSION THAT WOULD MAKE YOU GET OFF THE SOFA (I.E.: JUSTICE, PREGNANCY, ENVIRONMENT)

- Key Questions:*
1. WHAT THINGS DO YOU DO WELL ENOUGH THAT YOU COULD TEACH THEM TO SOMEONE ELSE?
 2. WHAT THINGS DO YOU LOVE LEARNING ABOUT?
 3. WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN NO ONE ELSE IS WATCHING?
 4. WHAT DO YOU LOVE TO SPEND TIME ON THAT'S NOT REQUIRED?
 5. WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT YOU?
 6. WHAT DO THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE YOU SAY YOU'RE BEST AT?

GIFTS OF ASSOCIATIONS

2

THE GIFTS OF ASSOCIATIONS

IN THIS CATEGORY, THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU KNOW IN THE COMMUNITY, IN RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT, OR THEIR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.

THIS LIST WILL CONTRIBUTE TO A SPREADSHEET OF NAMES AND ORGANIZATIONS/BUSINESSES THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO YOUTH AND TO MINISTRY.

- Key Questions:*
1. WHO ARE BUSINESS OWNERS, OR THEIR EMPLOYEES, THAT YOU KNOW?
 2. LIST 5 PLACES YOU MIGHT GO & THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WORK THERE THAT KNOW YOUR NAME.
 3. ADD THE NAMES & INFORMATION TO THE 'FISHING POND' SPREADSHEET.

GIFTS OF INSTITUTIONS

3

THE GIFTS OF INSTITUTIONS

IN THIS CATEGORY, THINK ABOUT THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE IN THE COMMUNITY AND THE SERVICES THEY PROVIDE. LIST THE INDIVIDUALS YOU KNOW WHO WORK IN THESE PLACES.

THIS LIST WILL CONTRIBUTE TO A SPREADSHEET OF NAMES AND INSTITUTIONS THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO YOUTH AND TO MINISTRY.

- Key Questions:*
1. WHAT SUPPORT STRUCTURES EXIST IN YOUR COMMUNITY? (I.E.: FIRE DEPT., CITY COUNCIL, HOSPITAL, LIBRARY, ETC.)
 2. WHO DO YOU KNOW WITHIN THESE SYSTEMS OF INFRASTRUCTURE?
 3. ADD THE NAMES & INFORMATION TO THE 'FISHING POND' SPREADSHEET.

ILLUMINATION OF ASSETS

Name:

GIFTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL



GIFTS OF ASSOCIATIONS

GIFTS OF INSTITUTIONS

Leader's
&
Guide

LAYERS OF KINSHIP

GIFTS:

PEOPLE:

DREAMS:

COMMUNITY:

CONNECTIONS:

This is about listening Work

USE THE QUESTIONS FOR EACH CATEGORY
- TAKE YOUR TIME - BE CAREFUL NOT TO SKIP A LAYER -
- REPEAT LAYERS IF NECESSARY -

1 GIFTS:

SOMETIMES PEOPLE HAVE A HARD TIME NAMING THEIR OWN GIFTS - ASK OTHER PEOPLE TO HELP IN NAMING THE GIFTS OF THEIR NEIGHBORS.

Key Questions:

1. WHAT THINGS DO YOU DO WELL ENOUGH THAT YOU COULD TEACH THEM TO SOMEONE ELSE?
2. WHAT THINGS DO YOU LOVE LEARNING ABOUT?
3. WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN NO ONE ELSE IS WATCHING?
4. WHAT DO YOU LOVE TO SPEND TIME ON THAT'S NOT REQUIRED?
5. WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT YOU?
6. WHAT DO THE PEOPLE WHO YOU LOVE YOU SAY YOU'RE BEST AT?

4 COMMUNITY:

NAME PLACES IN THE COMMUNITY THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THIS INDIVIDUAL. THE ENTIRE SMALL GROUP ANSWERS THESE KEY QUESTIONS. ADD THE NAMES AND INFORMATION TO THE 'FISHING POND' SPREADSHEET.

Key Questions:

1. WHAT INFRASTRUCTURES IN THE COMMUNITY USES AND NEEDS THESE GIFTS AND DREAMS?
2. WHAT BUSINESSES PROVIDE OR NEED THESE THEMES?
3. WHERE MIGHT WE FIND PLACES OF CONNECTION RELATED TO THESE THEMES?

2 PEOPLE:

SOMETIMES PEOPLE FEEL ALL ALONE EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT, THEY JUST NEED A REMINDER THAT THEY ARE SURROUNDED BY SUPPORTERS AND ADVOCATES.

Key Questions:

1. IN YOUR FREE TIME, WHO DO YOU SPEND TIME WITH?
2. WHO WOULD YOU TURN TO AND ASK FOR A FAVOR?
3. WHO ARE THE LAST FIVE PEOPLE YOU TEXTED/EMAILED/CALLED?
4. WHO ARE THE LAST FIVE PEOPLE WHO TEXTED/EMAILED/CALLED YOU?
5. WHO BESIDES GOD AND ME [THE INTERVIEWER] IS GOING TO GO WITH YOU ALONG THE WAY?
6. WHO CELEBRATED YOUR LAST BIRTHDAY WITH YOU?

5 CONNECTIONS:

WE ARE ABLE TO ASK OUR FRIENDS TO HELP OUR OTHER FRIENDS. THE ENTIRE SMALL GROUP ANSWERS THESE KEY QUESTIONS. ADD THE NAMES AND INFORMATION TO THE 'FISHING POND' SPREADSHEET.

Key Questions:

1. WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT MIGHT HAVE ACCESS TO THE COMMUNITY LOCATIONS MENTIONED?
2. WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT WORKS IN THE LINE OF WORK ASSOCIATED WITH THESE GIFTS?
3. WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT COULD HELP WITH THESE DREAMS?
4. WHO COULD GIVE OF THEIR TIME AND SHARE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THESE TOPICS?

3 DREAMS:

GIVE THIS INDIVIDUAL TIME TO VOICE THEIR OWN VISIONS, WITHOUT INTERRUPTION. MAKE SURE TO ASK QUESTIONS. BE CAREFUL NOT TO JUMP IN AND INTERJECT SOLUTIONS.

Key Questions:

1. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY AND ACCOMPLISH?
2. WHAT KIND OF WORK MIGHT YOU WANT TO EXPLORE?
3. WHAT IS A DREAM OR A VISION YOU HAVE FOR YOURSELF?
4. WHAT EXCITES YOU? WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?

LAYERS OF KINSHIP

Name:

GIFTS:

PEOPLE:

DREAMS:

COMMUNITY:

CONNECTIONS:



DISCOVERABLES

WE ACT
OUR WAY
INTO NEW
WAYS OF
THINKING

The goal of this Asset Based Community Development exercise was to help you **uncover** all the gifts that God has placed on your team. The **hope** is that you are now aware of ways in which God has been preparing you all for this work at this time! You have been called, equipped, and now we are all going to focus on **how to move forward together**. Who in your group is a **connector**? And, are they willing to facilitate the connections that have been discovered as a part of this project?

With what you have learned from this exercise, we would like you to **name 3 major "discoveries"** of this time together. Have you found a common theme or thread to the gifts you embody? Have you found out that someone on your team is especially equipped for this work because of their experience, perspective, or giftedness? **Name those 3 discoveries, tell about them, and describe how these discoveries will make a difference for your focus.**

Then, in conclusion, we would like you to **imagine a creative and fun way to celebrate these gifts**. How will you **share with your congregations** the gifts that are emerging from this design team? Don't hide your gifts under a basket... place them out in the light for the world to see! This is God's beautiful handiwork and we get to celebrate this together!

Celebrate the work of God in the people around you!



DATE:

LOCATION:

IN ATTENDANCE:

WHO IN YOUR GROUP IS A CONNECTOR?:

AND, ARE THEY WILLING TO FACILITATE CONNECTIONS FOR THIS PROJECT?

3 DISCOVERIES YOU'VE MADE:

HOW WILL YOU CELEBRATE THESE GIFTS?: