



EXTERNALLY FOCUSED NETWORK

THE **BEST** **EXTERNALLY** **FOCUSED** Ideas of 2011

It only takes one for your church
to transform your city.

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About This Report

Christians can change the world—but only if they are *first* transformed by Christ. This comes first, but it is not enough. It's not enough to have a personal faith contained to only our hearts and the church. A personal gospel is a partial gospel.

Let me use a picture to illustrate it. You are probably familiar with this drawing that helps explain personal salvation. It illustrates the power of Christ's cross and how, in the spiritual realm, it defeats sin, judgment, and death and gives us forgiveness and eternal life. While this illustration is true, it's not the whole truth.

Using the same picture, we can create a more complete portrait by adding other places and ways the cross of Christ impacts the world. This second picture illustrates that Christ's cross and kingdom transforms not just the spiritual, but social and economic sectors too. It defeats racism and establishes justice for all. It works against poverty and provides jobs, food and housing. And it does so much more because more can be added (e.g. physical, governmental, environmental, etc.). As Jesus' disciples, we are to join Him in His mission to redeem, reconcile, and restore all things.

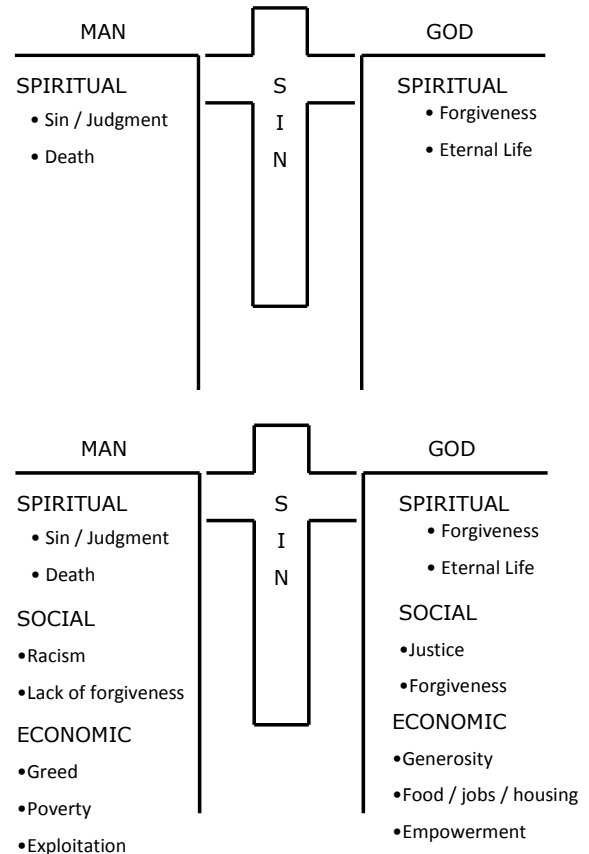
To help you and your church do that, The Externally Focused Network has put together this report containing stories from churches all across the country that are creatively and effectively transforming their cities in the areas of human trafficking, homelessness, adoption, education, business as mission, and more. Additionally, these churches represent many denominations and range from small rural churches to urban mega churches. So no matter the denomination or size of your church, this report is for you!

Read these ideas and see if God compels you to try one or inspires you to create a new idea. And remember, it only takes one idea to start transforming your community and church.

Let us know what your church does—or has already done to make a positive impact in your community. Shoot me an email (bmavis@gmail.com) and share your story of your church's influence—your church may end up in next year's report, helping more churches and communities across the country.

Shine!

Brian Mavis



*Church: New Heights Church
Location: Fayetteville, Arkansas*

What's the problem?

Churches all across the nation are birthing ministries that are geared toward serving at-risk, underserved kids. And while many of these ministries are effective in helping at-risk kids, often times these ministries lack the knowledge of how to effectively help the entire family of an at-risk child.

What's the solution?

Alex Hedgepeth and Jim Hall, both of New Heights Church in Fayetteville, AR, began dreaming and scheming several years ago about how they could better reach entire families within the at-risk ministry of New Heights Church. Additionally, they hoped to do this while also providing extra funding for the ministry. Out of much prayer and thought came the idea of a thrift store.

Potter's House Thrift Store was officially launched in the summer of 2009. In the beginning stages, the store had two employees who sorted through a handful of donations in an old store space. Today, it has grown into a full size store with over 45 employees. Hedgepeth, the manager and director of Potter's House Thrift, says that almost 40 of the employees at the store are related to or have a connection with the kids who are involved in the at-risk ministry within New Heights Church called Potter's House. The funds earned through the store are used to help provide jobs for the older kids and families within Potter's House Ministries, not to mention paying for many of the at-risk kids to go to camp, attend summer internship programs, and participate in activities they normally wouldn't have had a chance to be a part of.



Volunteers sorting clothes at the thrift store.

Although each of the 40 employees with ties to the Potter's House at-risk youth have been greatly affected by their jobs at the thrift store, Harold is an employee who has been particularly blessed and changed by his employment there. Jim Hall, the executive pastor at New Heights, began building a relationship with Harold about 20 years ago through a local troop of scouts. Jim saw Harold go through both good times and bad, good choices and poor choices. After Harold dropped out of high school, he was forced to sell drugs to make ends meet. God had more in store for Harold though. Jim approached Alex about finding Harold a job at the thrift store. Harold began working at the thrift store soon after the grand opening and his life has been transformed for the better. After a year of working at there, Alex and Jim saw dramatic transformation in Harold. He was no longer an inconsistent employee, but one of the most dependable and well respected employees at Potter's House Thrift Store. His job helped him get married to a wonderful woman, provide for his family, and find a loving church home where he regularly attends.

Harold is just one of the star employees at Potter's House Thrift Store. For the first time in many of the employees' lives, they are learning how to have a good work ethic, how to communicate effectively, and how to take responsibility for their actions.

Want to do something like this?

If your church would like to start a thrift store, you can contact Alex Hedgepeth at alex@newheightschurch.com, to obtain resources and an expert's advice on how to begin.

New Heights Church Website: <http://www.newheightschurch.com/>

Potter's House Thrift Website: <http://pottershousethrift.com/>

*Best Externally Focused Ideas
of 2011*

Church: The Well Community Church
Location: Fresno, California

What's the problem?

Fresno, CA has the highest concentration of poverty of any city in the U.S. It's one thing for a church to organize a day of service to meet those needs; after all, a lot can be done when a few thousand people come together to serve for a day. However, it's another thing entirely for the church to instill into their congregation a love for the city and a lifestyle of service.

What's a solution?

Several years ago, The Well Community Church of Fresno, CA organized their first Serve Day, a citywide event aimed at utilizing the church's resources to meet the needs of the community. Since then, Serve Day has grown to include projects all across Fresno to help with a multitude of problems.



However, The Well still wasn't completely satisfied with Serve Day. It just wasn't moving people to a lifestyle of service like they had hoped. Therefore, this past year at The Well was all about moving hearts from a "Day" of service to a lifestyle of service for "Dei," which is Latin for God. Instead of an organized one-day serve event, the responsibility and money for Serve Dei was placed in the hands of the church.

Inspired by Don Miller's Storyline Conference and his book, [A Million Miles in a Thousand Years](#), The Well took the money that they would have originally spent on Serve Day and distributed it in Serve Dei packets, each containing a five-dollar bill. Every member of the church received a packet under one

"They poured themselves out to the Fresno community in nearly as many ways as there were people."

stipulation: that the money be treated as God's money, not your own. Though it wasn't much, each person was challenged to ask God what He wanted him or her to do with it.

The result was astounding. The church scattered to use their God-given gifts and abilities to meet their community's needs. They poured themselves out to the Fresno community in nearly as many ways as there were people. By asking and wrestling with God about a measly \$5, individuals discovered how few resources are needed to bless those around them; they learned what it means to love their neighbors like Christ in both word and deed.

Want to do something like this?

Serve Dei's website (<http://servedei.com/>) is a great resource for anyone wanting to bless their community like The Well Community Church has done. There you will find videos and articles providing a very practical model to learn from.

The Well Community Church Website: <http://thewellcommunity.org/>

Two Rivers Church Erodes Away School's Problems

**Education,
Tutoring,
Mentoring**

*Church: Two Rivers Church
Location: Lenoir City, Tennessee*



A crew from Two Rivers doing some landscaping at Eaton Elementary

What's the problem?

Over 50% of the students at Eaton elementary school in Lenoir City, TN live in poverty. A majority of the students are on a subsidized lunch plan and live in homes where one or both parents are absent.

What's a solution?

Two Rivers Church sits four miles down the road from Eaton elementary. Five years ago, Two Rivers began asking themselves, "What are the needs of our community and how can we meet them?" As they began seeking the Lord's direction, all roads led to Eaton elementary.

After an initial visit with the school's principal, Two Rivers learned of an unexpected need. Rather than asking for help with tutoring, the principal expressed a need for help with landscaping. So, having a desire to serve the school in whatever way

necessary, Two Rivers jumped on the opportunity. They pulled weeds, spread mulch, and did whatever else was asked of them.

Soon, Two Rivers realized another need of the school: day care for the teachers' children. Many of the teachers drove long distances before and after school to day care facilities, adding to their already demanding workday. Two Rivers communicated this need with another church that happened to be getting rid of several portable buildings. As a result, Two Rivers received a portable building for free that was then transported to the school, renovated, and set up as a day care. Today, this building is known as "The Cottage."

It wasn't until two years ago that Two Rivers actually began tutoring and mentoring the students of Eaton. In partnership with Kids Hope USA, many church members are now building relationships with the teachers and children of the school. As a result of this relationship with Eaton their test scores have gone from very low to very high.

Additionally, Two Rivers is also providing annual Christmas and Easter events at their church to provide food and gifts to the families of Eaton elementary. They also provide backpacks of food to more than 130 students every Friday, and warm clothes to the students every winter. In addition to the school board recognizing Two Rivers for their service, the principals of Eaton elementary just recently visited the church to express their gratitude for all that is being done to help their students.

Want to do something like this?

Schools all over the country are in great need of help. I encourage you to set up a meeting with one of your local school principals and see what needs to be done. We can all learn a great lesson from Two Rivers by the way they did not carry their own agenda into the school. Two Rivers serves Eaton in whatever way they are asked, whether it's pulling weeds or teaching math. In their eyes, even the smallest task carries meaning and significance for God's kingdom.

"We can all learn a great lesson from Two Rivers by the way they did not carry their own agenda into the school."

*Church: Mosaic Church
Location: Charlotte, North Carolina*

What's the problem?

Many public school teachers lack the necessary supplies needed to help them perform their jobs. While school supply drives for students are rather common, supply drives for teachers in which they receive donated supplies to aid them in their teaching throughout the year are much more rare. Members of Mosaic Church in Charlotte, N.C. recognized this need and decided to provide this service to the teachers at the North Meck High School.

What's a solution?

Mosaic Church is considered a "mobile church." This means they do not own their own church building, but rather use or rent a building to have their Sunday services. About two years ago, Mosaic started meeting at North Meck High School.

After brainstorming about ways to come alongside the faculty and staff of the school, Mosaic members came up with the idea of a teacher supply drive. Ashley Fazal, a staff member at Mosaic, contacted faculty members of the school to get recommendations of the kind of supplies teachers need for the year. She then designed a graphic for the drive that listed the dates of the supply drive as well as a list of the supplies needed for the teachers, which included red pens, white out, markers, Kleenex tissues, white board markers, post-it notes, paper towels, hand sanitizer, and notebooks. Her next step was to collect paper bags from local grocery stores. She asked local stores to donate as many paper bags as possible. She then stapled the graphic for the supply drive on the bag. For the month of August, Mosaic Church had these bags available for members to fill and bring back any time before the end of the month.

"Before the first day of school, members of Mosaic had Panera Bread Company cater muffin tops and coffee for the teachers as they came to pick up their bags of supplies."

Before the first day of school, members of Mosaic had Panera Bread Company cater muffin tops and coffee for the teachers as they came to pick up their bags of supplies. Mosaic was very pleased that each of the 100 teachers at North Meck High School received a bag.

Mosaic's service to North Meck High School did not stop with the teacher supply drive, though. Mosaic Church also noticed that the teachers' lounge at the school needed some work done. Some volunteers from the church painted the lounge and purchased the faculty and staff a much-needed new microwave. The principal of North Meck High School was so impressed by the work of Mosaic Church that he had a few of the staff members speak to the school about who they were and what they had done for the school. As a result, a few of the teachers at North Meck High School now attend Mosaic Church.

Want to do something like this?

The model for a teacher supply drive used by Mosaic Church is practical and easy to replicate. First, meet with the principal and a few faculty members of a particular school to let them know of your interest. Ask for recommendations on the supplies teachers might need throughout the year. Gather paper sacks and staple a flyer with the list of supplies needed and then let members of your church fill the sack accordingly.



*Church: Anaheim First Christian Church
Location: Anaheim, California*

What's the problem?

Principals in the Anaheim, CA public elementary schools say the lunch break is the most “at-risk” part of the day for their students. Unstructured time without adequate adult supervision is a breeding ground for bullying and misbehavior.

In low-income areas like Anaheim, the trouble can quickly get serious. Tracy Rinauro, the Deputy District Attorney for Orange County, says 8-10 year olds are the prime targets for gangs seeking new members.¹

What's an answer?

The school administration says enrichment is the solution—to give at-risk children more adult role models, creative outlets and personal attention. My Safe Harbor, a nonprofit organization created by Anaheim First Christian Church, works to counteract the influences of poverty and crime by working with single moms in the city. It was an easy “yes” to help their children, too.



Volunteer blowing bubbles with students at Orange Grove Elementary.

“We said, ‘Let’s play with our kids!’” says executive director Becky Ahlberg. “That’s where the name ‘Our Kids/Our Schools’ came from. These kids are part of our community and it’s up to us to help.”

Each day, a team of volunteers in matching blue t-shirts visits Orange Grove Elementary School during the 90-minute lunch and recess period. The adults—some from the church, some from a nearby university, and some from the city of Anaheim—sit and talk to the kids, color and play with the younger ones, and organize soccer games and other activities for the older ones.

“The school marked off a quarter-mile and challenged kids to run it and track their distance,” Ahlberg says. “We cheer for them and mark their progress—many kids have run 100 miles, and almost all have run 25.”

Twice a year the Our Kids team stages a special Sunday afternoon event called “Revolution.” Volunteers bring crafts, games and hobbies to share, and the kids visit each station to play, learn and have fun.

Want to do something like this?

The project began when Ahlberg visited the principals of four local elementary schools and asked how My Safe Harbor and First Christian could help. Don’t assume enrichment and supervision are the biggest needs for the school district near you.

However, if the program makes sense in your area, it’s “embarrassingly easy to do,” she says. “We don’t plan complicated activities—we simply hang out with the kids during lunch, every school day, all year. We have a long-term presence in the community and the kids have consistent relationships with caring adults.”

A rotating group of volunteers takes the lunch shift each day, with most committing to one day per week. My Safe Harbor has become an ORI (Organization Requesting Information) so they can do the fingerprinting and background checks on every volunteer.

Anaheim First Christian Church Website: <http://www.anaheim1st.org/>

My Safe Harbor Website: www.MySafeHarbor.org

¹ My Safe Harbor. “The Program.” <<http://mysafeharbor.org/programkidsschools.shtml>>



Mayor Challenges Church to Create Adult Literacy Program

Education,
Tutoring,
Mentoring

Church: Salinas Valley Community Church
Location: Salinas, California

What's the problem?

Monterey County, CA has an illiteracy rate of 11%. One out of four adults read below a fourth grade level. 55% of adults seeking services say their inability to speak, read and write English is a barrier. In the Salinas High School District, 1,500 out of 2,000 incoming seventh graders read below grade level. 46% of children enter kindergarten without the necessary skills. Children from homes with low literacy skills have less success in school and at work. Children who can't read by the 4th grade are among the first to drop out of high school. And most tragic of all, these adults and students have no personal access to the Bible: God's message of love to them.



SVCC members teaching Salinas community members how to read.

What's a solution?

Over a decade ago, recognizing this need, Salinas Valley Community Church went to the neighborhood public school and developed a partnership: mentoring children, fulfilling teacher wish lists, doing construction and clean-up projects, landscaping, repairing computers, improving the track and ball fields, and much more. Out of that relationship SVCC developed a partnership with the school district as a whole.

But SVCC still wasn't addressing the root of the problem. Challenged by the mayor of Salinas and the Community Foundation of Monterey County to develop a faith-based model to address adult literacy, they launched adult literacy center. Because of SVCC's partnership with Santa Rita Unified School District, they targeted the parents of those students.

Originally SVCC was challenged to address this issue because the mayor and the Foundation believed that adult learners, who are easily intimidated, would come to the Church because they view the Church as a place they can trust. They have found that this is indeed the truth. Learners feel comfortable and stay in the program because of the warm, caring relationships they build with their assigned tutors.

The adult literacy center has been in operation for just over a year now. They've developed a replicable model, using one-on-one tutoring and curriculum that anyone can be trained to follow. Forty-five adults have come through our center thus far and over 50 tutors have been trained. There are many ESL learners in addition to those who've quite simply never been able to read or write. SVCC has seen adults enroll who are the parents of children they've been mentoring in literacy at the neighborhood elementary school. Now some of these parents are also bringing their children to SVCC's midweek children's program and are reading scriptures with them. It will take between 2-3 years for most of these adult learners to become completely literate, but 75% of the learners are right on track to reach that goal. Additionally, the Salinas city libraries literacy program has adopted this model for their program.

"We deal with the financial, emotional, and logistical components of their life...But we also try to provide some fun, diversion, and ways to support 'self care.' We laugh and cry together."

Want to do something like this?

The great thing about this is that anyone can do this. You will make an incomparable difference in the quality of life (now and for all eternity) of these learners. For information on getting started, please visit Salinas Valley Community Church's website (<http://www.svcc.net>) or contact Diane Pate at dianep@svcc.net.

Visit <http://www.literacycampaignmc.org> for more information about literacy.

*Church: Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church
Location: New York, New York*

What's the problem?

Nearly three decades ago, several deacons from Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church (FAPC) in New York discovered that homebound senior citizens in the area received meal assistance during the week, but received no food to eat over the weekend.

What's a solution?

You may be familiar with the program Meals on Wheels, but you most likely haven't heard of FAPC's Meals on Heels, a program that delivers hot meals and snacks to the homebound senior citizens by foot, directly from the church's kitchen.



Members of FAPC packing up meals to take to the elderly in their community.

Initially, the support came from the Deacon's Benevolence Fund at FAPC, as well as from local chefs who voluntarily donated food. For the past 17 years though, FAPC has been given a benefit evening to raise funds. The evening features a homemade dinner and dessert buffet followed by a musical revue or play featuring other talented supporters of Meals on Heels.

Want to do something like this?

Many homebound senior citizens are assisted with meals during the week by Meals on Wheels, but there is a great need for weekend meals. To start something like Meals on Heels, you can contact Bob Brennan, co-program coordinator, at moh@fapc.org, to find out more information on how to get something like Meals on Heels started in your area.

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church Website: <http://www.fapc.org>

Each Saturday morning, from 8:30 a.m. until noon, over 25 volunteers can be found at FAPC assisting in meal preparation and delivery for Meals on Heels. Bob Brennan, co-program coordinator of Meals on Heels, says a typical Saturday morning menu might include baked chicken breasts, roasted potatoes, succotash, salad, a roll, and pistachio pudding with cookies. Additionally, they give out a tin of tuna fish, a tin of mixed fruit, crackers, and cranberry juice.

As one might suspect, the funding for this program can get quite expensive.

a healthyCHURCH
requires
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*Think of management software in terms of **building** a *house*: with some solutions the plans are already in place with little ability to **change**. The walls are *already* in place and you have to make your furniture fit their rooms. What sold us on CCB is the flexibility. We can *move the walls* and create rooms to fit our furniture. It has the **flexibility to do church the way we wanted to.***

Steve Boyd

Connections Director
Christ Community Church
St. Charles, IL



Church: Fellowship Bible Church
Location: Bryant, Arkansas

What's the problem?

Fatherlessness is a big problem in today's world. Approximately 20% of children live in single mom homes.¹ However, fatherlessness isn't limited to homes where the father is physically absent. Fatherlessness is also a result of a father's emotional, mental, and spiritual absence in the lives of their children. Our generation is in desperate need of more fathers.



Free Resources From All Pro Dad

Mike also hosts an annual Daddy-Daughter dance for the fathers of Hurricane Creek Elementary. It is an exciting night of pretty dresses, dancing shoes, and daddies loving on their little princesses. For each of the past two years, an average of 260 dads and their dates have attended this great event!

As a result of his success, there are plans to launch these programs in three other Bryant schools this year. Thanks to Mike, many dads and their children are growing closer, and fatherlessness is on the decline in the town of Bryant, Arkansas.

Want to do something like this?

The great thing about this idea is that it's easy to replicate. All Pro Dad has many chapters across the United States, with new chapters being added all the time. For a small annual fee, you can gain access to their entire curriculum for use at your school. If this is something you're interested in, you can either join a local chapter or start your own. For more information, check out the All Pro Dad Website below.

Fellowship Benton Website: <http://www.fellowshipbenton.com/>

All Pro Dad Website: <http://www.allprodad.com/>

¹ ChildStats.gov. "America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2010." <http://www.childstats.gov/pdf/ac2010/ac_10.pdf>

What's a solution?

In 2009, Mike Harbour of Bryant, AR partnered with his child's elementary school, Hurricane Creek, and All Pro Dad to reach out to other fathers in his community. Each month, Mike sends invitations home with the students of Hurricane Creek inviting the children and their dads to join him and his child once a month for a breakfast catered by Chick-fil-a.

At each meeting, an average of 60-70 students and their dads show up for a 30-minute breakfast in the Hurricane Creek cafeteria. All Pro Dad supplies the curriculum, which usually includes a Bible verse and a discussion question for the dad to discuss with their son or daughter. These discussion questions are designed to foster a growing relationship between the fathers and their kids.

"Our generation is in desperate need of fathers."

Church: LifeBridge Christian Church
Location: Longmont, Colorado

What's the problem?

The Colorado foster system has approximately 365 children waiting to be adopted, with new children entering on a continual basis. Most of these children are hard to place because of ethnicity, being a sibling set, male, or older than nine. 80% of children that do not get adopted and age out of the system end up homeless, addicted, pregnant, or in jail. Most Coloradoans have no idea that these kids exist and can be adopted.

What's a solution?

The Heart Gallery is Colorado's most effective recruitment tool for locating adoptive families for older children; approximately 40% of the children featured in the exhibit find their "forever families" within one year of being featured.



This is one panel of many in the Heart Gallery

The Colorado Heart Gallery is a collaborative effort among the Colorado Department of Human Services and was founded in 2005 by Diane Granito's vision to "picture a family for every child." "This nationally renowned, annual exhibit features photographs of the children in Colorado who have been waiting the longest for an adoptive family. The faces of the children featured in the Colorado Heart Gallery tell incredibly compelling and highly emotional stories."²

"...approximately 40% of the children featured in the exhibit find their 'forever families' within one year of being featured."

In 2008 LifeBridge church became the first church in Colorado to help host the Heart Gallery. As a result, a relationship formed between LifeBridge and the Heart Gallery based on their shared desire to help orphans in their state find "forever families." This relationship led to a second opportunity for LifeBridge to host the exhibit in 2010 and then to the creation of a second, identical gallery in 2011 after receiving approval from the Colorado Department of Human Services. This exhibit was appropriately given the title of "Heart Gallery II."

Today, LifeBridge Christian Church is responsible for coordinating the rotation of Heart Gallery II among many of Colorado's churches. They are working together with the efforts of the government to raise awareness among Coloradoans of the many legally-free, adoptable kids that are waiting for a "forever family" to call their own.

Want to do something like this?

Colorado is one of forty-two states across the U.S. that has a Heart Gallery. Becoming involved like LifeBridge is as simple as locating your nearest Heart Gallery and asking how your church can help. Who knows, maybe someday soon you too will be helping coordinate a statewide effort of churches to find "forever families" for hundreds and thousands of orphans!

LifeBridge Christian Church Website: www.lbcc.org

Colorado Heart Gallery: www.heartgalleryco.org

¹ Jefferson County Human Services. "Colorado Heart Gallery Coming to Jefferson County." 2010. <<http://denver.yourhub.com/Denver/Stories/News/General-News/Story~843019.aspx>>

² Colorado Heart Gallery. "About The Heart Gallery." <<http://www.heartgalleryco.org/about.asp>>

Church: New Hope Church

Location: Lorton, Virginia

What's the Problem?

One child dies every five seconds from hunger-related causes—that's 16,000 children each day around the world. Many don't live to see their fifth birthday. Especially at risk are children under two years old—malnutrition early in life can cause irreversible developmental consequences and permanent damage to the brain and immune system.¹

What's a Solution?

New Hope Church in Lorton, Va., canceled church services one weekend to pack meals for hungry children. In just 48 hours, nearly 700 volunteers packed 140,616 meals—enough to feed 385 children a solid meal each day for an entire year.



To make this happen, New Hope partnered with Feed My Starving Children (FMSC), a Christian organization that ships meals to hungry children in 70 different countries around the world. Through FMSC's "MobilePack" program, churches like New Hope can host food-packing events for their community while FMSC provides the necessary food and packaging, as well as event promotional materials.

New Hope families brought their friends and neighbors to help pack the meals—each of which costs 24 cents and includes rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and 20 vitamins and minerals tailored to meet the needs of a 4 to 8-year-old malnourished child. People from other churches, groups, and even Girl Scout troops participated in New Hope's event as well. Many were surprised by the church's willingness to cancel services for an important cause.

"The volunteers experienced what it is like to be the hands and feet of Jesus. And once you've tasted that, you want more!"

"The evangelism potential of this project was off the charts," says Kim Feld, New Hope's director of women's ministry and small groups and one of the FMSC event organizers. "Most people care about starving children whether or not they care about Jesus. This gave them an opportunity to help and to also

hear *why* we were doing it. The volunteers experienced what it is like to be the hands and feet of Jesus. And once you've tasted that, you want more!"

Moved by their experience through the event, many volunteers have returned to the church for services and other events. And New Hope intends to host another MobilePack event in December, this time with a goal to pack 300,000 meals.

Want to do something like this?

In 2010, more than 515,000 volunteers across the United States joined FMSC to package over 124 million meals for children. Contact FMSC about MobilePack hosting requirements or how you may partner with churches already hosting events in your area if funding and/or space should pose difficulties.

New Hope Church Website: www.newhope.org

Feed My Starving Children Website: www.fmsc.org

¹ Bread for the World. <www.bread.org>

*Church: Southland Christian Church
Location: Lexington, Kentucky*

What's the problem?

Even before the latest economic downturn, millions of people in the US struggled to afford basic healthcare for their families. Today 15-17% of Americans are uninsured, and even future reforms could leave many of them without help.

What's a solution?

Southland Christian Church (Lexington, KY) launched the Refuge Medical Clinics in 2008 to provide free checkups, preventative care, and even surgery for the poor in their area.

Refuge began by partnering with the local health department in Jessamine County; the health department occupies its building during the day and Refuge uses the space on weeknights. Another clinic serves people downtown during the day. Both clinics serve uninsured residents who meet federal poverty guidelines.

A team of administrative assistants, prayer warriors, doctors, dentists, and others—all volunteering their time—provide a variety of services. In addition to primary care and checkups, the medical staff offers chiropractic care, eye exams, dental work, and referrals to more specialized physicians. Patient advocates work one-on-one to connect patients with local community agencies.

But the clinic also offers a holistic approach that values relationships with each patient and each family. This summer, the clinics launched a Community Artisan Gallery for patients to show and sell needlework, carpentry, jewelry, paintings, and other items.

"Patients had brought these into the clinic as thank-you gifts for the staff," says Rachel Smith, the clinic director. "The event was a great way to show value for our patients and their skills. We invited both volunteers and patients, provided live music and food, and welcomed members of the community."

One woman, gathering a crowd of interested children as she crocheted a blanket, offered to give free lessons at the clinic. Another offered to teach jewelry-making as both art therapy and a marketable skill.

Smith says this "relational healthcare" approach leads some patients to invite the doctors and volunteers to their family weddings and baptisms and even opens doors to talk about reconciliation with God. "Health care is just an open door to establish relationships and express the love of Christ," she says.

Want to do something like this?

At a large congregation like Southland, a number of people could immediately jump in and help when the program launched. But you don't have to have thousands of members or a partnership with the health department to make a meaningful difference.

"If you are a medical professional, simply be intentional about offering free services to a few people," Smith says. She also encourages health care professionals to show the compassion of Christ. "Our current health care system makes us so focused on getting people in and out the door," she says. "Take a few moments to talk with patients about what's going on in their lives. We expect people to invest in their health care but we don't invest in them."

She advises churches wanting to take the next step not to start with a full-scale clinic. Instead, gather a core team of service providers who want to help and begin researching options in your area. Most states have a free clinic association; these can be good sources of information on starting your own clinic and connecting to others that are already established.



Community Artisan Gallery

Church: Imago Dei Community
Location: Portland, Oregon

What's the problem?

1.8 million people die each year from water born illnesses due to a lack of clean water.¹ The estimated cost of providing clean drinking water to everyone on earth is \$10 billion. In light of this issue, Americans still spend approximately \$450 billion on Christmas every year. Have you spotted the problem yet?

What's a solution?

In 2006, Imago Dei Community was one of 4 churches to ask themselves, "What if Christmas became a world changing event again?" They recognized that what was once a time to celebrate the birth of a Savior has now

become a season of stress, traffic jams, and shopping lists. As a result of this thinking, Imago Dei and the three other churches made a commitment to focus on four concepts during the Christmas season: to worship fully, to spend less, to give more, and to love all. Additionally, they decided that at least 25% of the money donated during this time would be given to a water/distribution project of each church's choice. Now, what was once an idea among 4 churches has grown to include thousands of churches in at least 17 different countries. This idea is the Advent Conspiracy.

"They recognized that what was once a time to celebrate the birth of a Savior has now become a season of stress, traffic jams, and shopping lists."

As with most of the churches that are a part of the Advent Conspiracy, Imago Dei encourages its members to live as if the kingdom of heaven is real during the Christmas season. They are encouraged to take the time they would have spent shopping to love on their family, friends, and neighbors and to take their money they would have spent on presents and give it to kingdom causes.

Each week during December, Imago Dei holds a special offering specifically for Advent Conspiracy. While a portion of the donated money supports the work of Living Water International, Imago Dei also gives to 4 other areas of need. These areas include churches in Cambodia and Vietnam, new church plants, a collaborative gift from churches in Portland to eliminate human trafficking, and missional grants to people with ideas about how to transform their community for Jesus' sake. Through such a simple concept, Imago Dei and thousands of other churches are revolutionizing Christmas. Once again, it is a world-changing event.

Want to do something like this?

The great thing about the Advent Conspiracy is that a church of any size can do it. It is based on 4 simple concepts: worship fully, spend less, give more, and love all. For more information, visit the Advent Conspiracy website or search for it on YouTube.

Advent Conspiracy Website: <http://www.adventconspiracy.org/>

Imago Dei Website: <http://www.imagodeicommunity.com/>

¹ Water. "Love Well. Give Wells." < <http://www.adventconspiracy.org/water/> >



Church: First Baptist Church
Location: Columbus, Georgia

What's the problem?

Several years ago, members and staff at First Baptist Church of Columbus, Georgia started to take notice of people who were under-thanked in their community: people such as garbage men, foster parents, homeless shelter volunteers, and military men and women.

What's a solution?

In order to show thanks to these people, FBC decided to honor a group of under-appreciated citizens in the community each year with a Thanksgiving banquet. These community members and their families are made the guests of honor at the Thanksgiving banquet. The evening includes a traditional Thanksgiving meal, a speaker who gives a speech on the subject or occupation the guests of honor are involved in, and a time during which the guests of honor receive gifts and a blessing from FBC for their work in the community. Jimmy Elder Jr., Pastor at FBC expressed that he wanted FBC to move away from looking at what's wrong in the community and instead look at what people are doing right in the community.



Thanksgiving feast honoring the under-appreciated.

For example, one year FBC decided to honor citizens who worked for the Business Improvement District. These men and women are assigned to be hosts and hostesses for the uptown Columbus District. They do everything from sweeping the streets to mowing lawns to talking with and assisting tourists. FBC wanted to specifically thank these men and women for the service they provide for the city of Columbus.

“These [under-appreciated] community members and their families are made the guests of honor at the Thanksgiving banquet.”

This year, FBC has decided to focus on the issue of poverty. About a year ago, FBC identified several agencies that they consider “partner” agencies. The Thanksgiving Banquet this year will honor seven of these partner agencies, which include food banks, shelter homes, rescue missions, and other ministries that assist the poor and homeless in Columbus. FBC has asked one staff person and one volunteer from each agency to attend the banquet. FBC’s pastor, Jimmy Elder Jr., says about a month before the Thanksgiving banquet the church will hear sermons and Sunday school lessons on the issue of poverty and then have opportunities to assist these organizations in helping the poor in the community.

Want to do something like this?

This outreach project is easy to replicate. Pastor Jimmy Elder Jr. says the first thing to do is adopt a mindset and philosophy of wanting to give specific thanks to people in the community who are under-thanked. He then suggests talking to community members about people or organizations who are integral to the community and who go without much thanks. Call out one of these groups to honor and then find a speaker that will thank them and honor them for their service to the community.

First Baptist Church of Columbus, Georgia Website: <http://firstbaptistcolumbusga.org>

Church: Community Christian Church
Location: Naperville, Illinois



Volunteer helping a woman find the perfect presents for her children.

What's the problem?

A majority of the students in the Aurora, IL school district are from low-income families. As a result, many of the parents are unable to get their children gifts for Christmas, leaving the parents feeling incapable and demoralized. After all, what loving parent doesn't want to give their child a good Christmas present?

What's a solution?

Since 2003, Community Christian Church of Naperville, IL has sponsored a Christmas Gift Mart for low-income families within several local schools. Every year, in preparation for the event, new and unwrapped toys are collected from church attendees, local businesses, schools, and other organizations in the community. These gifts are then sold to parents for the reduced price of

\$2.00 in order to give them the joy and dignity of choosing Christmas gifts for their children, rather than just receiving a handout.

The Christmas Gift Mart also provides free gift-wrapping, raffles off fully decorated Christmas trees, and entertains children so parents can shop undistracted. All proceeds received from the sales go back to the partner schools in order fund school-improvement initiatives, giving parents the chance to enhance their children's education.

The first year that Community Christian hosted this event it was at one school, Brady Elementary. They collected over 1,200 toys, had 125 volunteers, and raised \$820 for the school. This past year, in 2010, the event was hosted at three different schools (2 in East Aurora and 1 in Joliet) thanks to partnerships with other churches and local organizations. In total, they collected over 14,000 toys, had 1500 volunteers, and raised \$15,000 for the schools.

“After all, what loving parent doesn't want to give their child a good Christmas present?”

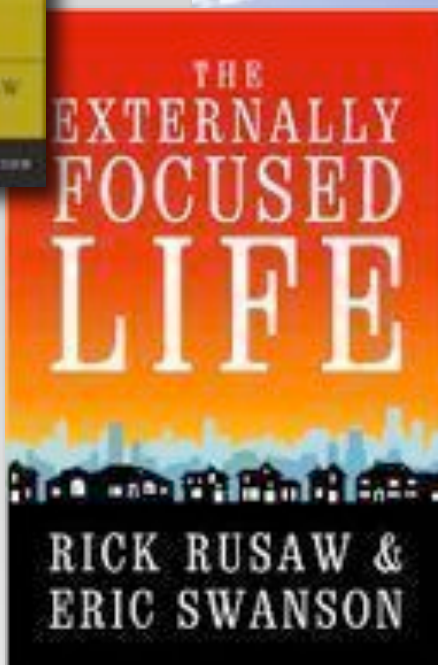
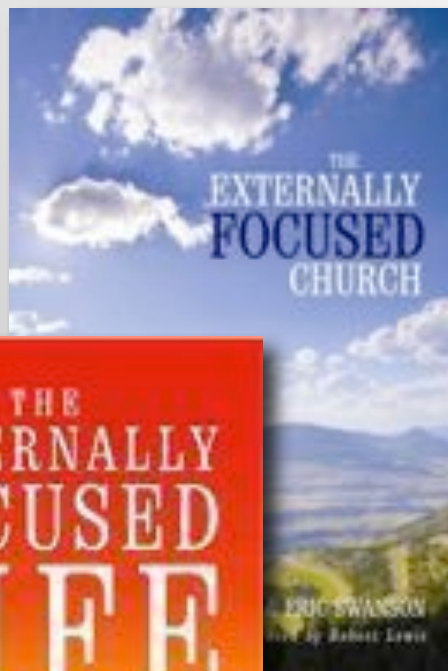
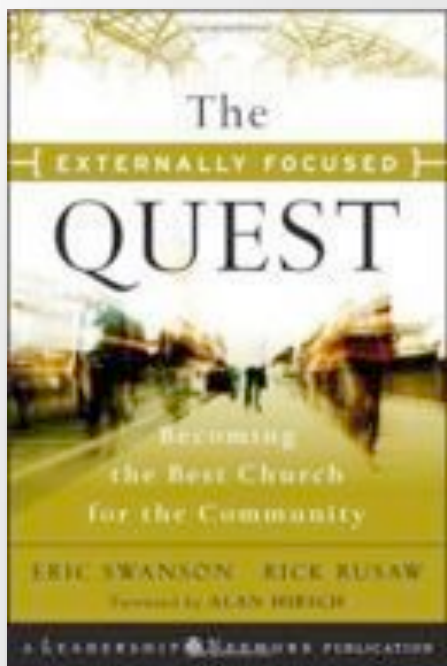
Want to do something like this?

Community Christian Church has made it easy for other churches to replicate the Christmas Gift Mart. The first step is for your church to identify a partner school in an under-resourced community. Ultimately, we hope that the Mart would be just one of many ways that your church serves the school throughout the year, but it is often a good first event to begin building a relationship with teachers and staff. As your next step, we recommend downloading a manual that Community Christian has produced for any church interested in doing such an event. They have done a great job outlining how the Gift Mart works and what you need to know to pull off one in your own community. To begin downloading this manual for free, please click [here](http://communitychristian.org/).

Community Christian Church Website: <http://communitychristian.org/>



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Church: Bethany Bible Church

Location: Phoenix, Arizona

What's the problem?

Phoenix, AZ has become a magnet city for forced child prostitution, with girls as young as 11 involved. Minors picked up by police for prostitution may avoid jail when it becomes clear they were held forcibly in this lifestyle. But with few resources and support--and no housing--these traumatized teens often feel they have no option but to return to their pimps.

What's a solution?

When Bethany Bible Church's outreach pastor, Brad Pellish, learned in 2008 that forced prostitution wasn't just something happening in far-flung places like India, but right in his own backyard, he was horrified. "I knew God was saying to me, 'Brad, you've ignored [this issue] for too long.'"



Overhead view of safehouse

Pellish's first step was educating his flock.

He brought in vice officer Chris Bray from the Phoenix PD to explain the realities of child prostitution. Since officers like Bray often pay for burgers and tacos for the rescued girls from their own pockets, Bethany's first response was to collect \$4000 in gift cards to fast food restaurants to give to the vice squad. Last year the church began its "ViceUnderCover" prayer support ministry. It has "adopted" all 22 of the vice officers. Additionally, a team of eight women from Bethany have launched an outreach to befriend and share God's love with strip club dancers.

"Officer Bray says he's never witnessed anything like this church's response to the needs of a group that many city residents disdain."

Most importantly, the church has closely partnered with StreetLight PHX, a collaborative effort to build a multi-faceted, 30-bed safe house that will bring hope and healing to young girls rescued from the streets. Through Bethany's "Free to Laugh, Laugh to Free" annual fundraiser starring comedian Carlos Oscar, the church has already raised nearly \$125,000 towards the safe house. Officer Bray says he's never witnessed anything like this church's response to the needs of a group that many city residents disdain. "When you look in the eyes of these girls, you see intelligence in there," Bray says. "But you don't see hope. This whole StreetLight project for the safe house is going to have a huge affect on these kids."

Want to do something like this?

[StreetLight Phoenix](http://www.streetlightphx.com/resources/) offers educational resources for churches to help them understand and respond to the problem of child prostitution.

Bethany Bible Church Website: <http://www.bethanybiblechurch.org/>

StreetLight Phoenix Website: <http://streetlightphx.com/resources/>

Church: Allen Temple Baptist Church
Location: Oakland, California

What's the problem?

Today, up to 30 million people—roughly the population of Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas combined—are estimated to be slaves or victims of human trafficking around the world. Of these nearly 30 million, some 80% are women and children often used for commercial sexual exploitation. In the United States alone between 14,500 and 17,500 women and children are trafficked each year.¹ It has become one of the largest global crimes, second only to drug trafficking.

What's a solution?

When *Essence* magazine published a feature in October of 2010 spotlighting the sexual exploitation of girls in east Oakland—Allen Temple Baptist's own neighborhood—the church decided it needed a ministry that raised awareness about the growing problem. In fact, young women and girls involved in sexual slavery regularly walk up and down Allen Temple's street, but many look upon the girls—some as young as 10 years old—with disdain.

In March, the church celebrated Freedom Weekend—two days devoted to addressing human trafficking in various ways. Allen Temple showed the documentary *Very Young Girls*, a behind-the-scenes view of exploited children in New York City; put on a skit demonstrating the pain and suffering involved in trafficking. Reverend Harry Williams, head of the church's human trafficking ministry now called The Streets Disciples, preached two sermons calling for compassion on those involved, and released his book *Straight Outta East Oakland 2: Trapped On The Track*—a call for churches to take action. Additionally, a victim of sexual exploitation gave her testimony.



To help host the weekend, Allen Temple partnered with Not For Sale, an international movement working to equip and mobilize modern-day activists to re-abolish slavery. Not For Sale sponsors "Freedom Sunday,"—"a worship platform that provides churches with what they need to become more aware and more active in opposing modern slavery." Available resources include sermon notes, suggested music, bible studies, videos, as well as fact sheets and articles.

A few weeks later, the Streets Disciples sponsored the first-ever East Oakland Human Trafficking Summit. The audience heard from Melissa Farley, executive director of Prostitution Research and Education, and Nola Brantley, executive director of MISSEY (Motivating Inspiring Supporting and Serving Sexually Exploited Youth). Both organizations advise churches and community groups interested in confronting the crisis of human trafficking

The Streets Disciples talk with and minister to the girls on the streets, but they're also working on creating a safe place at Allen Temple for the girls to come and receive help, protection, and compassion. And word is getting out—families whose daughters have run away from home and been picked up for sexual exploitation and other crimes like robbery now come to Allen Temple for help and prayer.

Want to do something like this?

Raising awareness is often the first step to combatting human trafficking. Although based in San Francisco, Not For Sale has chapters throughout the world—one likely near you—and is available to provide your church the help you need to educate people about the difficult issue. Nearly 2,500 faith communities are currently partnering with Not For Sale and many participate in Freedom Sunday. Although Freedom Sunday can be celebrated any Sunday of the year, the next global Freedom Sunday is February 26, 2012. And MISSEY (www.misseey.org) and Prostitution Research and Education (www.prostitutionresearch.com) are ready to answer your questions and help you start a ministry at your church.

Allen Temple Baptist Church Website: www.allen-temple.org

Freedom Sunday Website: www.freedomssunday.org

Not for Sale Website: www.notforsalecampaign.org

¹U.S. Department of State's 2006 Trafficking in Persons Report <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/>

Church: Common Ground Christian Church
Location: Tampa, Florida

What's the problem?

Although food pantries and homeless shelters offer vital supplies to those without enough to eat, too often the offerings are primarily convenience foods or canned goods high in fat and salt.



Member of the Tampa community working together on the garden.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are essential to a nutritious diet, but also more perishable and more expensive. Without a convenient and low-cost source for produce, most shelters can only provide less healthy options.

What's a solution?

Common Ground Christian Church of Tampa, FL uses part of its land as a community garden—and gives every veggie away.

The Kraft Corporation's Triscuit brand and Urban Farming, a nonprofit organization supporting community gardens, offered to sponsor a garden on Common Ground's property. The companies provided soil, plants, and tools and even

kicked off the 2011 program with a live simulcast of the groundbreaking event.

However, the church leadership had been planning to start a garden even before this opportunity. In addition to concern for the hungry in their community, many church members also appreciated the "green" focus of repurposing the land.

Brad Barmore, Director of Community Impact, says the garden also offered opportunities for outreach. "We approach outreach by learning who our neighbors are and speaking their language so we can share Christ," he says. "People from the community were interested in volunteering in the garden even if they didn't attend Common Ground."

**"People from the community were interested in volunteering in the garden even if they didn't attend Common Ground."
- Brad Barmore**

As the tomatoes, peppers, beans, melons, herbs and greens ripened, the team gave them away to needy families in the immediate area as well as a local "homeless café" that provides free homemade meals each Saturday.

Want to do something like this?

You don't need Kraft to take an interest in your church to have a successful community garden. Barmore recommends starting small—"only plant what you can manage!" he says—and assembling a team of people who know what they're doing in the dirt.

Make sure area gardeners are invited to participate, even if they don't attend your church, and give as much produce away as possible.

"Community gardens are not really that different these days," Barmore says, "but giving away everything you grow is unusual. People ask why we're doing it and it's the beginning of a great conversation."

Common Ground Christian Church Website: <http://www.commongroundtampa.com/>

Church: Woodland Hills Church
Location: St. Paul, Minnesota

What's the problem?

Some 49 million Americans live in "food insecure" homes, meaning their regular eating habits are disrupted by lack of money or other resources.¹ In Minnesota alone, 7.1% of the population—380,000 people—are hungry.² Many are children and seniors.

What's a solution?

At Woodland Hills Church of St. Paul, Minnesota, a "loafer" is not a lazy person but rather one who loaf! In 2001, Woodland Hills started its Loafer Ministry in hopes of feeding the hungry in their area with food that would otherwise go to waste. Much like how Jesus fed the 5000, they've found that one hour of a volunteer's time can multiply into satisfying the stomachs of many people.

The church first contacted the local Panera Bread and made arrangements to pick up unsold bread and pastries on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Next the church enlisted volunteers to do pick-ups and deliveries.



Panera Bread bakery

"Much like how Jesus fed the 5000, they've found that one hour of a volunteer's time can multiply into satisfying the stomachs of many people. "

Now, seven volunteers pick up four to eight bags of bread—weighing between 20 and 40 pounds each—on a regular basis. They then deliver the bread to three places, including the Ramsey County Family Service Center for families living in temporary housing and the Gladstone Senior Center for seniors. Some bread is also delivered to Woodland Hills for its Refuge Ministry, a group that meets weekly for those who are broken and hurting. One person who received the bread at the Family Service Center has given back—coming to help deliver bread to others.

Want to do something like this?

Contact your nearest Panera Bread, which operates nearly 1,500 bakery-cafes in 40 states.³ If there isn't one near you, consider a locally owned bakery. Then connect with area shelters, senior centers, or food banks that may benefit from the bread and arrange deliveries.

Woodland Hills Website: www.whchurch.org

Sources

¹ Feeding America. <www.feedingamerica.org>

² "Learn About Hunger." Channel One. <www.channel-one.org/Learn_About_Hunger.htm>

³ "History." Panera Bread Company. <www.panerabread.com/about/company/history.php>

Church: Trinity Baptist Church
Location: Raleigh, North Carolina

What's the problem?

Nationally, the unemployment rate is hovering just over 9 percent—the worst rate in 25 years. For certain groups in America, though, the challenges of getting a job are far greater. One study of unemployment among ex-offenders put their rate at 60 percent. Research has also shown that employers are often reluctant to hire people who have been on welfare or were recently homeless.



What's a solution?

Jobs for Life (JfL) is a national, church-based model for bringing hope to the hard-to-employ. JfL's three-part strategy involves Biblically based work readiness training, personal mentoring, and the cultivation of employer partnerships. JfL classes have been held in 144 cities nationwide, serving nearly 4,000 individuals. An early study of the model by the Hudson Institute found an 83% job retention rate among graduates, far superior to most job training programs.

In JfL's hometown of Raleigh, NC, Trinity Baptist has been coming alongside the unemployed for four years. Under the leadership of associate pastor Hal Melton and volunteer site coordinator Fred Paula, a dedicated team of some 30-40 Trinity members runs two JfL sessions each year. Students participate alongside their assigned mentors in Biblically based life and job skill classes held twice weekly for 16 weeks. Instructors include local pastors and Christian business professionals. Fred Paula reports that Trinity has served a wide range of students—low-income

“An early study of the model by the Hudson Institute found an 83% job retention rate among graduates;”

single moms, ex-offenders, women from the local Salvation Army homeless shelter, and even unemployed professionals from the church. One recent JfL graduate, who'd been unemployed for nearly three years following his release from prison, landed a job in the shipping department of a warehouse owned by a Trinity member. A single mom found her “dream job” as a bank teller and a formerly homeless woman from one of Trinity's first JfL classes now enjoys a fulltime job with benefits at Chik-Fil-A. “We have a lot of stories like that to share from our students,” Fred says. “And that's why our [volunteers] get pumped up every year.”



Want to do something like this?

Jobs for Life provides curricula and training for churches interested in launching a JfL site. Congregations can purchase a “turnkey” toolkit with all the materials needed to run the classes. Church leaders that want to see the model in action can search for a nearby JfL site here <http://www.jobsforlife.org/affiliate-locations.cfm>.

Trinity Baptist Church: <http://www.tbcraleigh.com/home.aspx>

Jobs for Life: <http://www.jobsforlife.org/>

Church: Jonesboro United Methodist Church

Location: Jonesboro, North Carolina

What's the problem?

Thousands of U.S. military men and women are deployed on various missions throughout the world. They are far from family and friends and often lonely, they long for the comforts of home.



Members of UMC writing letters to deployed military men and women

What's a solution?

Located about 35 miles from Ft. Bragg, N.C., Jonesboro United Methodist Church has a number of members in the Armed Forces—retired, on active duty, or serving in the National Guard or reserves. Through these members, the church got in touch with commanders and first sergeants of various units at Ft. Bragg.

The church requested the names of soldiers in units and then asked members of the congregation to “adopt” a soldier. The adoption requires them to write to the soldier at least once a month. As members write letters, Jonesboro UMC encourages them to remind soldiers of the love and safety they’ll find in Christ and to invite them and their families to Jonesboro UMC upon returning from their deployment. Through the correspondences, church members have also learned of the units’ specific needs, like personal items—toothbrushes, soap, bug spray, etc. So the church began sending these items along with the letters, pocket New Testaments, and even

pictures drawn by children in Sunday School—all in hopes of encouraging the soldiers and letting them know people at home are thinking of and praying for them.

Total, the Jonesboro UMC has adopted five units comprising 372 soldiers and sent hundreds of letters since the ministry began in the fall of 2008. In addition to the letters, at Christmas and Easter the church has included homemade cookies and other sweet treats.

“As members write letters, Jonesboro UMC encourages them to remind soldiers of the love and safety they’ll find in Christ...”

Want to do something like this?

Using members of your congregation who may have military connections, get in touch with a particular deployed unit. This may be as simple as talking with the parents or grandparents of a deployed son/daughter or grandchild—contact *their* unit. Get specific names of soldiers, and enlist members to begin writing letters and asking for specific needs of the unit.

Jonesboro United Methodist Church: www.jonesboroumc.org/military_ministry

Church: North Coast Calvary Chapel

Location: Carlsbad, California



Member of NCCC serving food to marines and their families

What's the problem?

Thirty-eight miles north of downtown San Diego and 82 miles south of Los Angeles is Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. The base is home to more than 38,000 military families, many of who are far from the rest of their family and friends. Often times, when marines are deployed, spouses and children stay in the area alone.

What's a solution?

North Coast Calvary Chapel (NCCC) established the Military Support Network in 2005 to help alleviate some of the stress and strain that families at Camp Pendleton endure.

One aspect of the ministry is volunteering to help at the Base's regular "family days" or special events, including pre-deployment briefs, return/reunion sessions, sweetheart banquets, baby showers, holiday food support, etc. At Camp Pendleton's last family day held at

nearby Lake O'Neill, 50 Military Support Network volunteers grilled and served hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken, and ribs, and also dished up dessert—root beer floats and ice cream sundaes! Often volunteers are able to eat and fellowship with the military personnel and their families, as well as connect with chaplains of various faith backgrounds.

Military Support Network also requests gently used furnishings to help fulfill specific needs of military families—furniture, strollers, baby clothing, bikes and helmets, pots, pans, dishes, etc. An unlocked SUV sits in a designated church parking space every Sunday for people to drop off goods.

In addition to serving those at Camp Pendleton, NCCC's Military Support Network sends its support to marines and sailors overseas. Most recently supporters sent boxes of silly string and shaving cream to a unit in Afghanistan. The requested string and cream is used to mark paths that signify the "all clear" of IEDs (improvised explosive devices). Volunteers also sew and send neck coolers and small spray bottles to combat the extreme heat, as well as scripture "dog tags" marked with Joshua 1:9, .. "I will be strong and courageous. I will not be terrified or discouraged for the Lord my God is with me wherever I go!"

"I will be strong and courageous. I will not be terrified or discouraged for the Lord my God is with me wherever I go!"
- Joshua 1:9

For their commitment and service, the leaders of NCCC's Military Support Network, Jack and Nina Baugh, were awarded the Spirit of Hope award at the Pentagon in 2009. The Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Juan Garcia, and Kelly Hope, Bob Hope's son, presented the award. They've have also been asked to share about the Military Support Network on a local Christian radio show and as a result garnered support and interest from other area churches.

Want to do something like this?

Hundreds of military bases—including Marine, Army, Navy, and Air Force—are located throughout the United States. Find and contact the one nearest you. Ask how your church can support their military personnel and families best. Often chaplains are a good place to start.

North Coast Calvary Chapel: www.northcoastcalvary.org



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*Church: Christ's Church of the Valley
Location: Peoria, Arizona*

What's the problem?

Don Wilson, senior pastor at Christ's Church of the Valley, realized he didn't know his neighbors--and he wasn't alone. Although they might drive across town to participate in a Bible study with other people from the church, most church members did not have relationships with the people on their street or in their subdivision. How could they reach the city for Christ if they weren't meeting the needs in their own backyards?

What's an answer?

The church divided the entire area into neighborhoods, identified CCVers in each one, and challenged them to "be the church" in that neighborhood by owning the responsibility for outreach and service. The group may still hold Bible studies, but they also provide meals for new mothers and grieving families, help with home renovation projects, organize neighborhood picnics, give groceries to those in need, and even collect money for a neighbor's medical bills or a rehab stay. One person in the group serves as a facilitator, leading the group activities and participating in training gatherings at the church.

"But while the church may be growing, the benevolence budget is not; groups are meeting nearby needs themselves instead of sending people to the church for help."

Other than youth and children's ministry, most CCV staff members now work in neighborhood ministry, overseeing areas of the city and recruiting and coaching new facilitators.

Executive pastor Ashley Wooldridge says the strategy is key to the church's current growth. But while the church may be growing, the benevolence budget is not; groups are meeting nearby needs themselves instead of sending people to the church for help.

Want to do something like this?

Wooldridge says the strategy can be adapted for any church in any area.

"You may have only one or two people in a neighborhood, but the mindset is the same," he says. "A smaller church might focus on different areas different months. Start with what you have, get people connected, and grow from there."

The neighborhood focus can also build unity among members. When Parkway Christian Church in nearby Surprise, Arizona merged with CCV this year, integration of the two groups into one body was easier because both congregations focused on the neighborhood ministry approach.

Christ's Church of the Valley Website: www.ccvonline.com

Church: Pulaski Heights Baptist Church
Location: Little Rock, Arkansas

What's the problem?

The members of Pulaski Heights Baptist Church (PHBC) in Little Rock, AR came to a realization that they knew little to nothing about their neighbors. Carolyn Yeldell Stanley, the outreach pastor at PHBC, along with other church staff and members of the congregation, knew something needed to change.



PHBC interacts with neighborhood residents

What's a solution?

PHBC asked, "What is something our community can relate to? What is something our community wants?" As time and prayers progressed, the answer became clear: a farmer's market.

In order to make the farmer's market happen, PHBC joined The Hillcrest Merchant's Association, an organization of merchants and professionals dedicated to enhancing and promoting Historic Hillcrest (a neighborhood of Little Rock) as a thriving and unique commercial district. The church asked the association if a farmer's market was something the community would be interested in? The answer was a

definite "yes." So, with the approval of the Hillcrest Merchant's Association in their pocket, PHBC began connecting with vendors, establishing a task force, and asking for volunteers in the church to help out.

The Hillcrest Farmer's Market officially began in May 2011. Each Saturday from May through September, the Market is set up along PHBC's sidewalk. The Hillcrest Farmer's Market has 17 local vendors that sell fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, canned jams and jellies, flowers, baked goods, and even blueberry soda.

PHBC also reaches out to their community at this event by setting up a tent with free Bibles, coffee, water, popsicles, and games and crafts for kids. "It's about building relationships with our neighbors," says Carolyn Stanley. "We want to know who they are and we want them to know who we are."

"Much like how Jesus fed the 5000, they've found that one hour of a volunteer's time can multiply into satisfying the stomachs of many people."

Although the main purpose of Hillcrest Farmer's Market is to allow PHBC to build relationships with their neighbors, the market also serves other purposes. Members and staff at PHBC want to be advocates of healthy living, caring for creation, and feeding the hungry. At the end of each market, if there is leftover produce, PHBC encourages vendors to donate the leftovers to certain ministries in the community, including the Dorcas House for women and children and the Union Rescue Mission.

Want to do something like this?

If your church is interested in serving the local community through a Farmer's Market, Carolyn Yeldell Stanley recommends evaluating several areas before beginning. Check with a merchant's association near you to see if a Farmer's Market would be something the community would support. If so, the association should have resources on how to begin the process of starting a Farmer's Market in your community.

Church: Bethlehem Baptist Church
Location: Minneapolis, Minnesota

What's the problem?

Nearly 750,000 state and federal prisoners are fathers. They leave some 1.6 million children under the age of 18 without dads at home, and these children are twice as likely to drop out of school, be obese, and end up in prison themselves. Unfortunately, these children will likely be left more than once, as 60% of fathers will pick up a new charge within a year of being released and return to prison.¹

What's a solution?

Dustin Shipley was sentenced to 42 months in the state penitentiary for a felony DUI leaving his two young sons fatherless. After serving his time, Dustin spent over a year working on re-acclimating to society, during which time he found a loving community in Bethlehem Baptist Church in downtown Minneapolis. It was there that Dustin started the ministry called Fathers for Christ, inspired by sharing the Gospel with his two sons while imprisoned. The mission? To equip incarcerated fathers to reach the hearts of their children with the news of their heavenly Father. This in turn, will hopefully keep the children out of prison in the future and stop the vicious fatherless cycle.



Dustin Shipley meeting with incarcerated fathers.

Dustin visits the Hennepin County Correctional facility twice a week for three hours to teach classes to interested inmates. Using Bethlehem Baptist's Desiring God curriculum, Dustin teaches them the fundamentals of Christianity while encouraging them to be the father God has called them to be. He also emphasizes the importance of saying no to their old lives—including habits, friends, and sometimes family members—because as Luke 9:23 says, we must take up our crosses and follow Christ daily. Helping Dustin are men from the congregation who mentor individual inmates and provide examples of what Christian husbands and fathers look like. They write letters to the inmates, visit them, and even do Bible studies over the phone.

Since the program began four and a half years ago, more than 600 men have gone through Dustin's classes, and the facility has noticed a decrease in the number of assaults in the quads Dustin works with. Fathers for Christ is now seeking 501c3 status, and creating a post-prison program to help fathers get back on their feet—with their children—once they're released. Bethlehem Baptist has helped provide everything from mattresses and refrigerators to rental apartments and resume help for recently released fathers.

Want to do something like this?

Correctional facilities are located throughout the United States. Consider enlisting someone in your church like Dustin who has been incarcerated to help make inroads at the nearest correctional facility. Although their knowledge and connections can be valuable, having this person is not necessary. Men in your church can begin mentoring incarcerated fathers who are willing to commit to the relationship. Your church can also help provide practical needs—such as furniture and food—for fathers just released.

Bethlehem Baptist Church: www.hopeingod.org

Desiring God: www.desiringgod.org

Federal Bureaus of Prisons: www.bop.gov

Fathers For Christ: www.fathersforchrist.net

¹ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. "Characteristics of Incarcerated Fathers." 2008. <<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/08/MFS-IP/Incarceration&Family/ch2.shtml>>

Church: Rye Presbyterian Church
Location: Rye, New York

What's the Problem?

State and federal correctional authorities have jurisdiction over more than 1.6 million prisoners; 93% are men.¹ This means millions of women have incarcerated husbands, sons, fathers, brothers, and other close family members. In addition to the emotional challenges and heartache involved, these women are often left to take care of finances, housework, and other practical responsibilities.

What's a Solution?

Rye Presbyterian Church in Rye, N.Y., made a commitment a long time ago to minister to those in prison by helping found a number of programs as well as partnering with other existing ones. For example, the church helped found Exodus Transitional Community, providing services to formerly incarcerated individuals upon release, and Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, the largest privately funded program providing college education in prison. The church also goes into numerous area facilities to minister directly to the prisoners.



Exodus Transitional Community

Additionally, for more than 13 years, Rye PC has supported women who have loved ones in prison through a group called Sisters' Circle. Between eight to 15 women gather at Marble Collegiate Church in New York City once a month to have dinner together and then talk about their challenges and concerns. Nancy Steed is a Rye PC member and has helped co-lead the group since its inception. She says among the things sometimes talked about at the meetings are husbands going to parole boards and either being released or turned down; the many struggles of being married to someone incarcerated; or a relationship's failure after the release even though the wife "did the bid" for 14 years or more. Sometimes the group offers encouragement and support for things not related to an incarceration such as a "sister" who has had a cancer diagnoses and is going through treatment, or has had a death in the family.

"We deal with the financial, emotional, and logistical components of their life...But we also try to provide some fun, diversion, and ways to support 'self care.' We laugh and cry together."

"We deal with the financial, emotional, and logistical components of their life experience and particularly the stigma many of them feel," says Steed. "But we also try to provide some fun, diversion, and ways to support 'self care.' We laugh and cry together."

Some women in Sisters' Circle have participated every month since the meetings began more than 13 years ago. Others come occasionally depending on their life circumstances. None of the women attend Rye PC, but "all our part of the family," says Steed.

Want to do something like this?

Begin by establishing relationships with your area correctional facilities. Rye PC has never advertised, but instead relied on word of mouth, often mentioning the group to prisoners. Confidentiality, safety, and anonymity are critical to the group's success. Also consider partnering with other churches that may already be doing other prison ministries.

Rye Presbyterian Church Website: www.ryepc.com

¹ U.S. Department of Justice. <<http://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/bjs/p09.pdf>>

Church: Fellowship Bible Church Dallas
Location: Dallas, Texas

What's the problem?

Every year the U.S. government invites about 75,000 refugees, those who have been forced from their home countries due to persecution, to become legal residents of our country. These survivors of often horrendous atrocities are



passionate about living out God's purpose for their lives here in their new home; however, without assistance that truly empowers and provides access to developmental opportunities, they often get stuck in multi-generational government assistance and lose heart to live out God's purpose and worship Him as their Lord.

What's a solution?

Community colleges often provide excellent vocational training and certificates that can enable refugees to access careers that have opportunities for advancement. In addition, although complicated, financial assistance is available.

A key need for refugees is understanding and adapting to the American culture. Values like time management, individual responsibility, personal initiative, attitude and networking are foreign to most refugees and yet crucial to their living out God's purpose for their lives in America. Beyond intellectual understanding, these values must be lived out.

The Refugee Empowerment Pathway (REP) consists of two schools that help refugees learn and practice these values as well as gain access to Dallas community colleges and financial assistance. Since REP schools are in English, applicants must meet a minimum level of English competency to participate. As a result, the initiative primarily suits refugees that are more assimilated to the U.S. culture and, after being trained, can lead other refugees through the empowerment process.

In addition to the training, these schools provide a venue for members of Fellowship Bible Church Dallas to develop meaningful relationships with refugee participants. Fellowship members serve as teachers and coaches by providing assistance in tutoring, financial advising, and career guidance. They learn quickly that they are perfectly suited to make an impact since they are so familiar with the culture. Due to the spiritual worldview of most people outside the U.S., these relationships have great potential for spiritual discussion and growth for both parties.



Fellowship Dallas has also been given about 1,500 square feet of meeting space by a local apartment complex that they use for REP. Fellowship Dallas and the apartment complex both see great value in this initiative for its refugee residents and others in the community. One room is used exclusively for classes and the other room is used exclusively for coaching sessions and relationship building.

Gilbert Lopez, REP volunteer, says, "Through REP I have made two great friends, Musa and Myo." Ilundu Dunia, refugee from Congo who is working on his associate's degree in Automotive Technology, says, "If you show me the way, I must show others. I tell my friends, 'This is the way. Follow me and see what I am doing here.'" Lewis Ekiye, REP volunteer, says, "I can see myself contributing to the body of Christ... I feel like I am growing and developing as a person by touching other people's lives."

Want to do something like this?

Visit the Fellowship Dallas website at <http://www.fellowshipdallas.org/outreach/rep>, or search for "Refugee Empowerment Pathway" on Facebook. You can also contact Ryan Schwanke at ryans@fellowshipdallas.org or 972-852-4130.

Church: Mariner's Church
Location: Orange County, California

What's the problem?

Every year over 750,000 teenagers get pregnant in the United States. Statistics reveal that 2/3 of families begun by young mothers live in poverty, 25% of teen mothers require welfare assistance within 3 years of the child's birth, and only 1/3 of teen mothers obtain a high school diploma. In addition, children of teen mothers are more likely to suffer neglect and abuse, have health problems at birth, do poorly in school, be incarcerated, and become teen parents themselves.

What's a solution?

Fristers (friends and sisters) was originally a ministry of Mariner's Church in Irvine, CA. Now a 501c3 nonprofit, it is dedicated to equipping and empowering teen moms in order to prevent them from becoming another statistic while also preventing their children from becoming victims of child abuse or repeating the same cycle of poverty and teen parenting. Fristers provides a comprehensive program



that meets the needs of teen moms, ages 13-25, through a variety of means including one-on-one case management, classroom teaching, group projects, field trips, and relationship-building activities. As a part of the program, Fristers provides free childcare, free dinner, and free transportation to and from the meetings. Given the age of teen moms and their lack of resources and support, these are significant issues that if not provided for, might prevent a young mom from getting the help she needs.

Since 2003 the Fristers program has positively impacted over 1,000 lives. For many moms, the Fristers program brings measurable changes like completing their high school education, obtaining their first job, or securing their driver's license. These achievements are a result of what they learned at Fristers and will make a positive impact on their future. For others, the changes are internal and harder to measure like transforming a negative self-image to a positive self-image, overcoming depression, or healing a broken relationship. Overall, through the Fristers program, teen mothers are learning, growing, and finding hope for their future and hope for the future of their child.

Fristers is accomplishing this mission through partnerships with local churches. Community churches provide weekly meeting space, childcare facilities, vehicles for the transportation of moms and children to and from meetings, and an

“For many moms, the Fristers program brings measurable changes like completing their high school education, obtaining their first job, or securing their driver's license.”

opportunity to share this program within the church-body. In return, Fristers provides the church with an on-campus ministry to teen mothers, leadership and management of the program, marketing in the community to raise awareness and

to reach out to teen moms, fundraising to cover costs, and training of all volunteers (through a series of DVDs called Fristers University).

Today, Fristers has expanded to a second location in Orange County, CA with a planned third location to be launched in the fall of 2011. Together, these local churches and Fristers are making an impact in their community by addressing the needs of two at-risk youth groups – teen mothers and the children of teen mothers – all while allowing church members to grow in their faith and service for our LORD.

Want to do something like this?

The great thing about Fristers is that it is designed for replication! Fristers goal is to help others successfully launch this program in other communities across the nation. If you would like to start a Fristers program at your church, please contact Ali Woodard for more information.

Church: Central: A Christ-Centered Church
Location: Trenton, New Jersey

What's the problem?

While homeless shelters at least provide a warm place to sleep, they are often depressing places, devoid of hope. Even in a facility where people maintain a room instead of vying for a cot each evening, conditions can be cramped and utilitarian.



man painting walls of room at preservation house

What's a solution?

After a tour of Family Preservation House in Trenton, NJ, members of CommunityConnections, the outreach ministry of Central: a Christ-centered church, knew something had to be done to improve the day to day living conditions of the temporary residents. At the very least, each room needed a new coat of paint. As a result, the "Adopt-A-Room" program was conceived.

Many of the church's Life groups each took on the task of not only painting one of the 17 bedrooms, but creating a "dorm room like" atmosphere by purchasing colorful linens, curtains, throw rugs, wall art, mirrors, and desk lamps. Because storage was an issue – no room had a closet so residents lived out of 3 'bins'—1 for food, 2 for clothing, bed risers were employed, under-bed storage containers purchased, and racking systems hung in each room's small alcove. Each room cost approximately \$300 - \$400 to refurbish, not including paint which was donated by a local Home Depot. Because of the constant turn-over of residents, items stayed with the room so everyone could enjoy them. Groups did "gift" certain things for the residents to keep such as a fleece blanket or pillow pet.

The good will created between Central, the shelter management, and the residents, led to additional opportunities. A Thanksgiving dinner was served by the youth ministry last November, and a Christmas celebration complete with food, gifts and carol singing was held in December. Central has now been invited to teach classes there beginning in the Fall of 2011. These include classes on money management, cooking, parenting, a book club and a Bible study.

"The good will created between Central, the shelter management, and the residents, led to additional opportunities."

What happens to residents once they leave? To maintain contact, Central put a 'housewarming gift basket' program into place. Each resident provides their new address and a laundry basket filled with cleaning products, medicine cabinet items and personal hygiene products is delivered along with literature on the church, a Bible, and any gently used items the family might need including linens, housewares and small appliances.

Want to do something like this?

If you or your church would like to serve in this way, you can contact your local social services agency to find out what the needs are for the homeless in your community. You can also check the internet for information on local shelters or non-profit organizations working with the homeless.

Central: A Christ-Centered Church's website: <http://www.worshipatcentral.org>

CommunityConnections Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/> and search

CommunityConnections at Central

Church: Hopewell United Methodist Church

Location: Downingtown, Pennsylvania



What's the problem?

Every year some 600,000 families in the U.S. spend at least one night homeless, sleeping in shelters, cars, or abandoned buildings; this includes 1.3 million children. According to the 2007 *Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*, 84% of all families experiencing homelessness are headed by single women.

What's a solution?

Bridge of Hope (BoH) trains churches to provide a mentoring group of 8 to 12 people who come alongside one homeless or at-risk single mother and her children and supports that team with a professional BoH staff person. The mentoring group provides friendship, practical help, emotional support, and spiritual nurture to the family for about 18 months, with the intention that the friendships will continue after the formal program ends.

Hopewell United Methodist Church in Downingtown, PA started partnering with BoH in 2003. Currently three mentoring teams are active, with their mentees at various stages in the BoH program. One team has come alongside a victim of domestic violence who became homeless, along with her twin 2-year-olds, about four months ago. The team has already helped this woman to find a new job and build confidence in herself, while BoH has secured her new housing. A fourth team just celebrated their mentee's completion of the program. Their graduate has improved her money management and relational skills. At a recent worship service, she told the congregation that her mentoring team **"taught me how to hug people."** Shauna Ridge, director of lay ministries at Hopewell, reports that she is currently recruiting a new mentoring team—and needs just two more people. She says Hopewell's "Beyond the Walls" campaign to raise money and volunteers for externally focused mission (only 10% of funds raised stay at the church) has focused the flock's attention on needs in the community and generated a very positive response.

"[The] mentoring team taught me how to hug people."

Eighty percent of single mothers in BoH's program successfully graduate. They leave with a secure home; new, supportive friends; and a plan for long-term economic stability through employment. And not just these women are blessed—the volunteers are, too. "We're seeing lives transformed, for sure," Shauna reports.

Want to do something like this?

The Bridge of Hope network currently includes [15 sites](#) that interested congregations could link to. The ministry also offers a [free start-up packet](#) to individual churches desiring to implement the model.

Hopewell United Methodist Church: <http://www.hopewellumc.org/>

Bridge of Hope: <http://www.bridgeofhopeinc.org/template/index.cfm>

You can *end homelessness*
for a single mom & her children.



Be a friend. Create church-based
mentoring experiences.



www.BridgeOfHopeInc.org



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While there are 29 great stories in this report, we know that we have only begun to scratch the surface of what externally focused churches are doing to transform their communities. I'm sure that many of you reading this have many ways by which you are doing just that.

If you believe that your church is doing something worth sharing, please let us know. To share your stories with us, please shoot us an email by clicking [here](#) or contact us by going to our website, www.externallyfocusednetwork.com, and clicking on the "Contact" tab at the top of the page.

If you like what you've read in this report, please let us know by following us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).



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