



The Path To Transformation
Goes Through Dreams.

COMMUNITY OF DREAMS FOUNDATION 2006 CITYREACHING PARTNERSHIP PROJECT



A Constellation of God's Dreams.

The ground has moved. Do you feel it? Do you grasp the implications? Do you sense the potential for what could happen as a new breed of leaders begins to see all of the people in their communities as a great constellation of God's dreams? When we really see it, it will change everything...as well it should.

And as you move with this perspective you may find there are few people right now who see it quite the same way you see it. But that's OK. The ranks are growing. Pretty soon you'll know many revolutionaries, deep friends to share with, work with...and play with. In fact, as the full adventure seizes you, play becomes a better description of what it will feel like, as we come along side, awaken, inspire, equip, and partner with God's dreams for our cities.



"You cannot tell your heart what it wants. Your heart will tell you
... Our dreams are who we are." -- Barbara Sher

Finding God's Story.

Rolf Jenson in his book, *The Dream Society*, chronicles our rapid movement from the Information Age to the Dream Society, where effective leaders will become—not just knowledge workers—but story-finders and storytellers. He demonstrates, through case studies, how it's not the best product or service or cause that captures the imagination and catapults an organization forward, but the best *story*.

As Dallas Willard puts it, "we live in a God-bathed world," and God's story can be found all around us in the hearts of people, where stories begin as dreams. The heart is the conversation room of the Holy Spirit, the place where God plants dreams and visions, and calls us to a purposeful destiny.

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To be truly effective in the *withreach** of people it's important to understand that the Holy Spirit has been speaking, wooing, calling, and inspiring people from their earliest childhood. To tap into someone's heart, and help them recognize and understand God's voice, is to midwife true identity and purpose. This can and should be the natural work of Christ-followers who in concert with the Spirit are well-equipped to 'coax out' God-given dreams, encouraging the stories, that move *The Story* on.

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To come along side people's dreams will many times bring you into their prayers before they are known to them as prayers. God hears the heart's cry and has given us the privilege of introducing dreamers to the Dream-giver, Himself.

Reaching people through their God-given dreams is incarnational withreach. We humbly approach people from within their world and seek out God's deepest active work in their spirit. This brings evangelism and discipleship together in a truly redemptive work, and because it awakens internal fires, it is the surest path to genuine transformation. From 'masterpiece' seed to maturity, this is purpose-driven discipleship along the path of God design. In this way, withreach discipleship comes full circle as dream-empowered people know experientially how to empower others.

God's dreams and purposes are found active in people and in the redemptive purpose of whole communities (discovery). Our role is also discerning and interpretive (nurturing), and connecting, supportive, and celebratory (acting). But the first step in the DNA process (*Discover-Nurture-Act*), is to find the story, the 'real story,' of people, families, and cultures, and even cities and nations. That is the great adventure!

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Five Dynamic Core Synergies

Yes, we see the vision for community transformation. We're moving from church growth to community impact, from program to purpose, from outreach to withreach, and from a 'clubhouse' congregation to a visionary missional church without walls. But like it or not, much of our traditional, program-oriented patterns still rule the day. It will take a very creative approach to work around the inertia of convention and it may be unwise to call a staff meeting and announce the abandonment of all existing programs (just yet).

But deep down, most leaders desire to bring two key qualities into their ministry planning: One is **integration**: a way to move forward as one team and one church, where the parts work together around a visionary, yet intelligent plan, fueled by both individual passion and common purpose. This is the antithesis of *many departments-many agendas* and *every-month-a-new-and-unrelated-event*. The other quality is simply progress or **progressive results**. We want to see that we are truly building *toward* something, and that we are measuring the outcomes that get us to where we really want to go. We want to feel each day the meaningful rewards and creative flow of God-directed experiences that come from doing exactly what God has called us to, and to see how those experiences connect to the larger vision.

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This is the heartbeat of the Community of Dreams approach to planning. To make the transition to a truly holistic cityreaching strategy we've designated five strategic areas of focus, or planning tracks. Because of the power made possible in their integration, we have chosen to call them Synergies. We will provide and recommend resources, content, and tools for planning along the lines of these key synergies and they will form the developmental components of a transformational cityreaching plan.

The Community of Dreams **Synergies** (Developmental Tracks)

Synergy 1 **Spiritual and Community Intelligence** (discovering God's dreams in our city)

Synergy 2 **Withreach Arts & Media** (awakening dreams)

Synergy 3 **Community Connections** (connecting dreams)

Synergy 4 **Coaching Communities** (coaching dreams)

Synergy 5 **Dream Incubators** (nurturing places for dreams)

The following pages provide a brief overview of each synergy.

Spiritual and Community Intelligence

Do you ever wonder what is really going on in your community? What are the unspoken heart cries of the people you want to reach? What are the trends and undercurrents moving through your community? What is God doing in your city right now and how can you discern His movements and align yourself in strategic partnership? Let's face it. For all our apparent sophistication and insightfulness we have to admit we only 'see through a glass darkly.'

When we start to look for really good community intelligence the only thing we find is that it's not readily available. We can't google it, and even existing local research only provides a small part of the picture. But we have to realize that without accurate spiritual-social intelligence we could easily be giving great answers to questions not being asked, while the most sincere appeals and urgent needs lie just off our radar. This not only greatly dilutes our resources, but most importantly, it can keep us from ever seeing the full impact we so desire.

So what can we do?

We could easily be giving great answers to questions not being asked.

The task of gathering spiritual and community intelligence is an adventure in discovering God's dreams and treasures in your city...and the path to genuine transformation. Here's a brief look at some strategic areas for thoughtful conversation, prayerful planning and thorough research:

- What is God already doing in your city?
- Where does spiritual intelligence come from?
- Incarnational research: finding God's story in the story
- How can we make ordinary conversations *extraordinary*?
- How can we create vibrant Community Conversations?
- Using Appreciative Inquiry as a tool of withreach
- Community Asset Surveys: matching people to purpose
- Community Mapping (*demographic, psychographic, lifestyle, historical, cultural, spiritual*)
- Community Listening Campaigns (focus on children and youth)
- City Roundtables: Listening to leaders in vital community spheres
- Documentation and Integration of community intelligence
- Intercession and God's dream for your city
- The relation of dreams and prayer
- The prayers and dreams of the poor are precious in the heart of God
- The role of personal healing in the discovery of true identity and dreams
- Community healing, identity, and redeeming purpose
- Spiritual intelligence from *Dream Incubators* (see Synergy 5)

Withreach Media and Arts

A communication revolution began in the closing years of the 20th Century, and like another revolution which paralleled and fueled the Reformation, we now realize that this one may greatly surpass the societal impact of the publishing revolution of Johannes Gutenberg's day. Most agree that this present media revolution is still in it's infancy, yet when fully-formed, will change almost everything. Yes, everything.

Even now, Media and the Arts, the Internet, and other forms of communication are quickly coming to the center of daily life and culture-formation. As a Community of Dreams synergy, this component considers and employs all communication, even personal conversations, in the mix.

In fact, the movement of media and art to the level of a spiritual conversation is a key distinction we *do* make with this Synergy. Our focus is not on one-way promotion or information dissemination (as we believe these represent the ineffective, wasteful, and sometimes dishonoring methods of a previous era) but on communication as incarnational withreach. The goal of Spirit-led communication should be to begin and end with conversations. It should be to awaken a conversation between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit, to provide pathways to move the conversation to another Spirit-led individual, and lead to a lasting spiritual friendship and transformation.

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Withreach communication is incarnational. With honor and humility it enters, then walks and talks within the heart of another, the chief goal being to awaken spiritual aspirations, and in so doing, convey Heaven to earth.

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*A Marketing Plan To
Change The World.*

As incomplete as it is, modern felt-need marketing was a forerunner of permission marketing and the emerging withreach approaches we are seeing now. Businesses learned to listen to their markets because they had to, and they've been two steps ahead of the Church through most of the last century. But while commodity marketers may have been the first to know the power of listening conversations, they are beginning to sense their limitations. For while salesmen are tolerated in the marketplace they are seldom invited into the home.

As media conversations become more connected, intimate, and audience-initiated, people will choose to talk about the things that matter most...and dreams (not detergents) will command the future.

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From Clubhouse to Community Impact

David Bornstein in his book, *How To Change The World*, documents the rise of a new citizen sector (a recent phenomenon hardly existing even a decade ago) made up of restless people seeking to deal with community problems not being solved by existing institutions. They are challenging, either actively or by example, many existing assumptions and forms. He shows how these people, who are “relentless in the pursuit of their visions, will simply not take ‘no’ for an answer and will not give up until they have spread their ideas as far as they possibly can.” He sees this trend as one of the most positive and promising forces for transformation.

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*How To Change
The World, by
David Bornstein*

*Revolution, by
George Barna*

In his book, *Revolution*, George Barna documents another movement with obvious ties. He shows how we are in a radical shift of allegiance from traditional local church to other forms of faith nurture and expression (a mix of alternative forms, family and media). Six years ago this was at a 70-30 split, and is continuing to track (within 20 years) toward complete reversal of that ratio, with only 30-35% remaining in traditional expressions! This has enormous societal implications in itself, but put these two movements together and it's quite revealing. For a transformational leader, it would be counter-productive to circle the wagons and fight the trend. With movements this strong and pervasive it is important to lift the hood and find out what engine is driving them. We need to ask the hard questions, be willing to change and adapt so we can become a guiding, creative force from within these currents of change.

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Present Future, by
Reggie McNeal

The present challenge for the Church in America is, as Reggie McNeal points out in his book, *Present Future*, to move from the 'clubhouse' mentality to our essential mandate to be a missional community. And the mission is not just to transform individuals, but cities and nations. This will happen in part through greater connection to the church worldwide. For when it comes to incarnational withreach and transformation, Christians in many parts of the world are blazing the trail.

To assess where we are in our mission, is to not only understand where we may be missing it, but to uncover vast untapped opportunities all around us. It is helpful to look at the picture from several angles. One angle is to look at the categories of activities we typically engage in when we "do" domestic missions. The charts below (though certainly not exhaustive) roughly contrast the status quo with the potential:





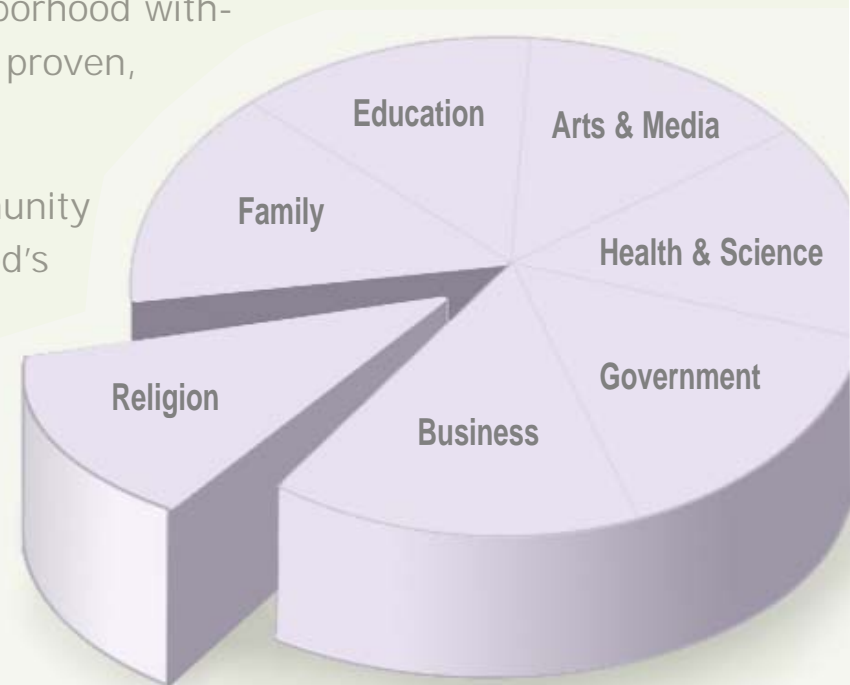
Another angle on this potential impact is to see how the Body of Christ can become more active in those broad areas of the community that generally influence transformation. Traditionally, church institutions have stayed within the bounds of religion. But if our communities are to become healed and whole, we must pursue genuine change in the other spheres of influence. We can begin by seeking out and honoring God-placed leaders in those fields. Second, we can connect with city leaders and humbly ask how the Church can serve and co-labor with them for the good of the community. Third, a church can act as a catalyst to unite congregation-based ministries for a coordinated city impact. What if all of the youth ministries worked together in your city? What about mercy ministries, counseling, or disaster response? Think of the potential impact!

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Churches That Make A Difference, by Ron Sider, Phil Olson, and Heidi Unruh.

Community transformation can begin with neighborhood transformation. It is there that you can take micro steps to build the macro vision, and more easily and quickly see results that will model and motivate more. Neighborhood with-reach strategies have already been pioneered and proven, and are ready for widescale use.

The Church is uniquely suited to the task of community transformation, from discovering and nurturing God's dreams in people, to forging relationships and reconciliation, convening community conversations, communicating compelling vision, fostering cooperation, and bringing genuine and lasting societal change.



Creating *Transformational* Coaching Communities.

There's a groundswell of change emerging today in the field of personal, family, leadership, and community development, and coaching is an integral and vital component. This generation is searching for authentic relationships—mentors and spiritual fathers and mothers—in an equally-authentic context...a mentoring community that lives for the discovery, equipping and releasing of God-given dreams. Just as it was during the explosive growth and change of the first-century Church, this kind of organic community is uniquely suited to the needs of our day.

Transformational Coaching works because it recovers the relational methodology that changes the culture as well as individuals and families — from the inside out.

Transformational Coaching is perfectly suited to the incarnational withreach model. The realization of its vision creates equipping, empowering, discipleship communities of people who can learn, grow, train, and lead together. Coaching Communities can be designed to be self-reproducing, expanding and growing, creating transformation in all areas of community life!

**Transformational
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*For more details on
developing a coach-
ing community, go to
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and click on
Transformational
Coaching*

Transformational Coaching is a tailor-made approach that enables parents, Christian workers, and leaders to come along side the Holy Spirit, to bring transformation as He does... from the inside out. It can establish a learning organism in your church, a mentoring community that discovers and develops people's unique design, desires, dreams, and destinies.

Transformational Coaching moves...

- from clinical to relational
- from cognitive to experiential
- from content to purpose
- from gatherings to community
- from learning to living
- from addition to multiplication

As a Community of Dreams support, a coaching community should...

- focus on people's identity, design, and purpose
- adopt best practices of transformational coaching
- become a highly relational community itself
- establish its own internal trainers
- serve other congregations and local ministries
- become self-replicating

Community of Dreams has integrated Transformational Coaching as a key component of the overall vision to provide a training and support system for the kind of coaching community needed to come along side the other withreach synergies. From 'extra-ordinary' conversation skills in dream-releasing, to re-framing the way we are "with" those we live around...to expanding conversations and relationships, this synergistic component provides a holistic process for the transformation of individuals, families, congregations, and entire communities.

Dream Incubators

Early in my career while working for a publishing house, I met a true cynic. Not a very good mix with a young idealist like myself, but surprisingly we became good friends. I'm still not sure what happened, but over the course of time God healed his wounded spirit. He initiated a Monday morning prayer and conversation time before work which developed into an oasis for our hopes and dreams in the midst of that rigid corporate environment.

Interestingly, the word cynic actually comes from the Greek word *kynikos*, meaning "dog-like." The first 'Cynics' were members of a school of philosophy in ancient Greece who apparently elevated cynicism to a high calling, dogging people and stomping out every spark of idealism they encountered. Ever known anyone like that?

Cynics and skeptics are with us still, and permeate our pragmatic culture. This spirit is especially harmful to children and youth... and the spiritually young just beginning to find their way. And it's simply devastating to those who carry broken dreams. Everyone needs space for their spirit to breathe, for their dreams to take root. Dreams need Incubators.

Simply put, *Dream Incubators* are places to awaken, nurture, and support God-given dreams and aspirations. While withreach says that *the path to transformation goes through dreams*—incubators provide context. A good question for any new program proposal is: Where is the incubator in this? Incubators can be small and

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simple, or large and comprehensive. It's not the size or complexity that makes it an incubator, but certain qualities, focus, and goals. As one measurement of growth and transformation, we recommend you create as many incubators as you are able. Here is where the incubator fits into the transformational cycle:

Awareness > Connections > Conversations > Friendships > Dream Incubators

A Coaching Community is an essential part of this and can be an Incubator in itself, but more likely it will fill a much broader support role to a network of Dream Incubators. Incubators can take many forms, but here are some of the qualities you should plan for:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. Accessible | The easier the better |
| 2. Neutral | Not viewed as a clubhouse |
| 3. Incarnational | Reflects the culture it serves |
| 4. Focused | Diverse themes and contexts, but focused on dreams |
| 5. Competent | Trained and supported by other coaches |
| 6. Affirming | Non-judgmental |
| 7. Trusted | No strings attached |

Dream Incubators can be as simple as a home group or neighborhood center or as comprehensive as a community center (as long as they keep the dream focus). They can be planted in a variety of contexts: as business incubators, conversation cafes, youth clubs, arts centers, as leadership

The key question: does it nurture God's dreams in the people it serves?

development, parenting programs, new member assimilation, career and life coaching, mentoring, intervention programs, community groups, and in age-focused contexts. The key question: *Does it nurture God's dreams in the people it serves?*

As we see the essential contribution of each of the five Synergies... Spiritual and Community Intelligence, Withreach Communication, Community Connections, Transformational Coaching, and Dream Incubators...we also see the potential as they work in an integrated way, combining for even greater transformational impact.

Creating Synergy

The five Synergies we propose can be viewed as 'handles for the revolution.' Based on mission-al values straight from the heart of God, we believe they represent emerging areas of strategic development needed to transition to further levels of understanding. We offer them not as a program-in-a-box approach, but as broad avenues for framing plans and integrating solutions. For much of the last 30 years, ministry planning has typically taken a linear, step-by-step, formulaic approach that looks something like this:



Problem is, there is only one place you can start, and once you've arrived at the goal (usually something rather artificial) you tend to never go back and culturalize what you've just zipped through. Our paradigms remain unchanged, and all we've gained is to have been a part of (and completed with some degree of success) another church program.

This diagram (which starts at the bottom and moves up) shows a more flexible approach which allows for creativity and culturalization. Beginning with any one of the Synergies (the small circles) as God leads, you can expand and incorporate the other 'synergies' in a somewhat cyclical or cross-linking way. The strategy processes to carry them out would develop naturally as well, according to your unique culture, vision, and challenges.



Begin Where You Are.

There are many good places to begin this journey and you certainly will want to concentrate on the areas to which you feel instinctively drawn. But the best first step is to begin where you are. Ask God to specifically lead you in those first areas of development and transition that take into consideration how God has been leading you, positive accomplishments, your congregation and local culture, and your own God-given dreams and vision. We can help you think through these steps.

But also, if this is resonating with you, it is because you already embrace a holistic vision for community transformation. Keep that big picture with a corresponding commitment to the kind of comprehensive planning process that will create the active synergies and the significant results you desire.

The **Community of Dreams Foundation** is forming long term strategic City Partnerships encompassing planning tracks in all five strategic Synergies.

Does this awaken a dream in you? Do you desire to be catalyst in the transformational dream...to experiment, pioneer, and live out the adventure of fulfilling God's dreams for your city? If this is your call, we want to partner with you to model new ways that will inform others and forge new paths for others to follow.

We prefer to establish this close relationship with just one church in each city (or city part) but then support each Partner in the desire to network and partner with other congregations for greater impact. Once the relationship is established, we essentially throw all develop-

ment, research, planning, creative content, imaging and branding, ongoing coaching, and the resources of our national partners into the mix. For your part, all we ask is an agreement on some basic values and vision (see 21Q), a start-up annual budget for a moderate level of media-based and volunteer-based strategies, and a high enthusiasm and desire to really work as partners for a focused, sustained plan to reach your city.

The focus is clearly on relationships, building a national network of passionate cityreachers and leaders who collaborate and innovate together to produce effective best practices of holistic cityreaching. These withreach approaches will be perfected in the trenches and emerge as transformational models that will inform an exciting future for all of us.

Next Steps. The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the 5 Synergies and our overall approach for planning and development. We hope it has given you even a glimpse of the great potential that exists for holistic cityreaching and community transformation. While it is not meant to answer all your questions, we hope it does create a sense of excitement and a desire to take the next step with us.

If so, please call or simply provide some quick thoughts via the Cityreaching Partnership request form on withreach.com (see link below). We'll let you know right away if your city is open. If a Partnership is already established in your area we will provide you with a point of contact and facilitate local collaboration if you desire. If your city is open, we'll guide you through everything you'll need to secure your license and begin the first steps of planning.

Request more information on the Cityreaching Partnership and begin a dialog [here](#) >

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