

# neighborhood engagement

VISION + STRATEGY

redeemer  
west side

**a church  
for the good of the city**

# traditional model

- giving
- service projects
- a few scattered individuals  
engaging on a deeper level

# problem

- we live “above the ground” and don’t have meaningful relationships with poor and marginalized people
- quick fixes



# solution

- relationships of proximity
- long-term change

*“Handouts don’t lead to transformation.  
Change requires long-term relational ministry.”*  
Chalmers Center

**from projects**



**to presence**

*“The Word became flesh and blood, and  
moved into the neighborhood.”*  
John 1:14 (The Message)

**“The church today is just at the start of what will be a long process of figuring out how to help the poor more effectively in the 21st century than we did in the 20th.”**

The Economic Wisdom Project

**vision**

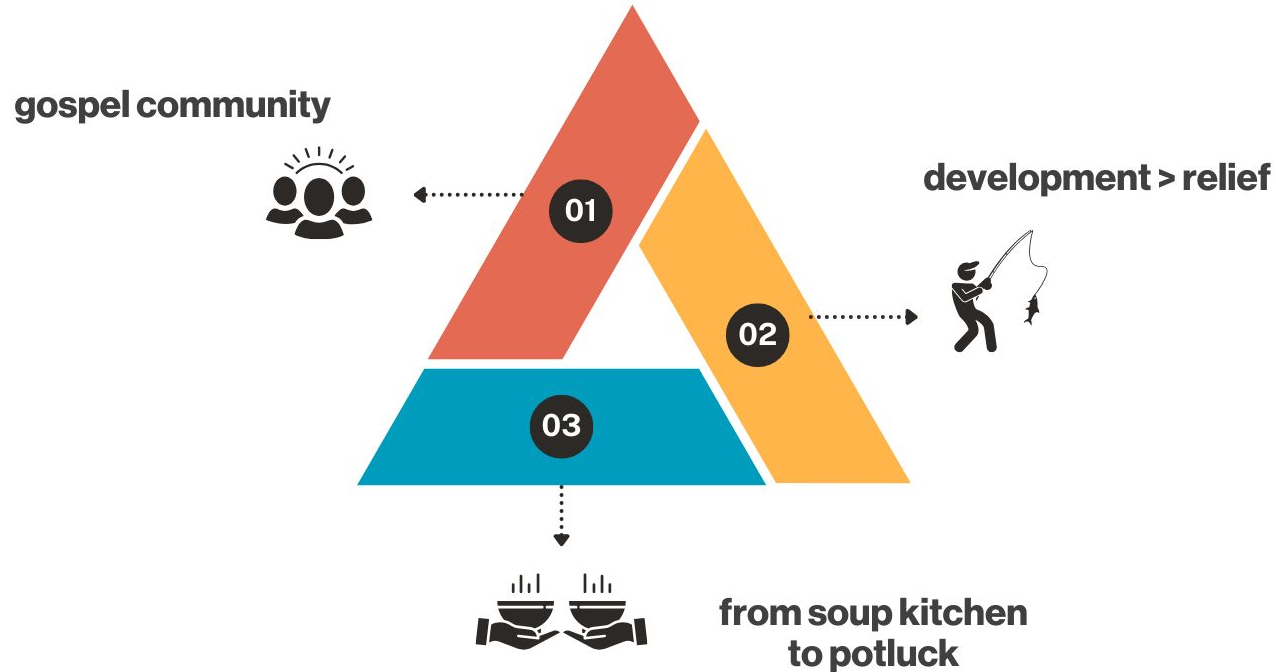
**VISION + STRATEGY**

**What are some essential  
components of a  
person's flourishing?**

Take 20 seconds to think of 4-5 answers.



# from projects to presence



The background features a stylized sun with rays at the top and several simplified human figures below it, all in a dark red color. A white square is positioned on the left side of the image.

# **gospel community**

**“rooted in and flow back into the local church”**

# **gospel**

A stylized sun with a curved arc and several short, thick lines radiating from it, positioned at the top center. Below the sun are four simplified human figures, each consisting of a circular head and a rounded, open-bottom shape for a torso, arranged in a group.

**A picture of a person's flourishing that does not include the worship of the true God is not only incomplete, it is malformed.**

**We should help people flourish materially, but such efforts should be integrally connected to helping them flourish spiritually.**

# community

A stylized sun with a curved line for a face and several short, thick lines for rays, positioned at the top right. Below the sun are three large, dark brown circles representing heads, and below those are three dark brown, rounded shapes representing shoulders or chests, suggesting a group of people.

## **What poor people lack:**

One of the greatest things poor and marginalized people lack is a supportive community. Allowing them to find community is an essential part of their becoming whole.

## **What our congregants lack:**

The currents of modern life pull us into “lifestyle enclaves” - institutions, communities, and social networks that are far removed from poor and marginalized people.

The background features a stylized sun with rays at the top and three simplified human figures below it, all in a dark red color. The text is centered over this graphic.

**God's vision for his people was that the “poor and non-poor would be in deep relationship with one another, rubbing shoulders every day as full participants in the same community.”**

Brian Fikkert and Kelly Kapic, *Becoming Whole*



# implications for rws

**1) Metric for success: Is our church community welcoming and culturally accessible to poor and marginalized people? Do they feel like they belong?**

**2) Incorporate supportive groups in the design of our neighborhood engagement initiatives.**





# development > relief

“Handouts don’t lead to transformation.  
Change requires long-term relational ministry.”

# three levels of assistance



## Relief

giving someone a fish

ex: food and clothing services, temporary shelters



## Development

teaching someone to fish

ex: tutoring, mentoring, job and financial training



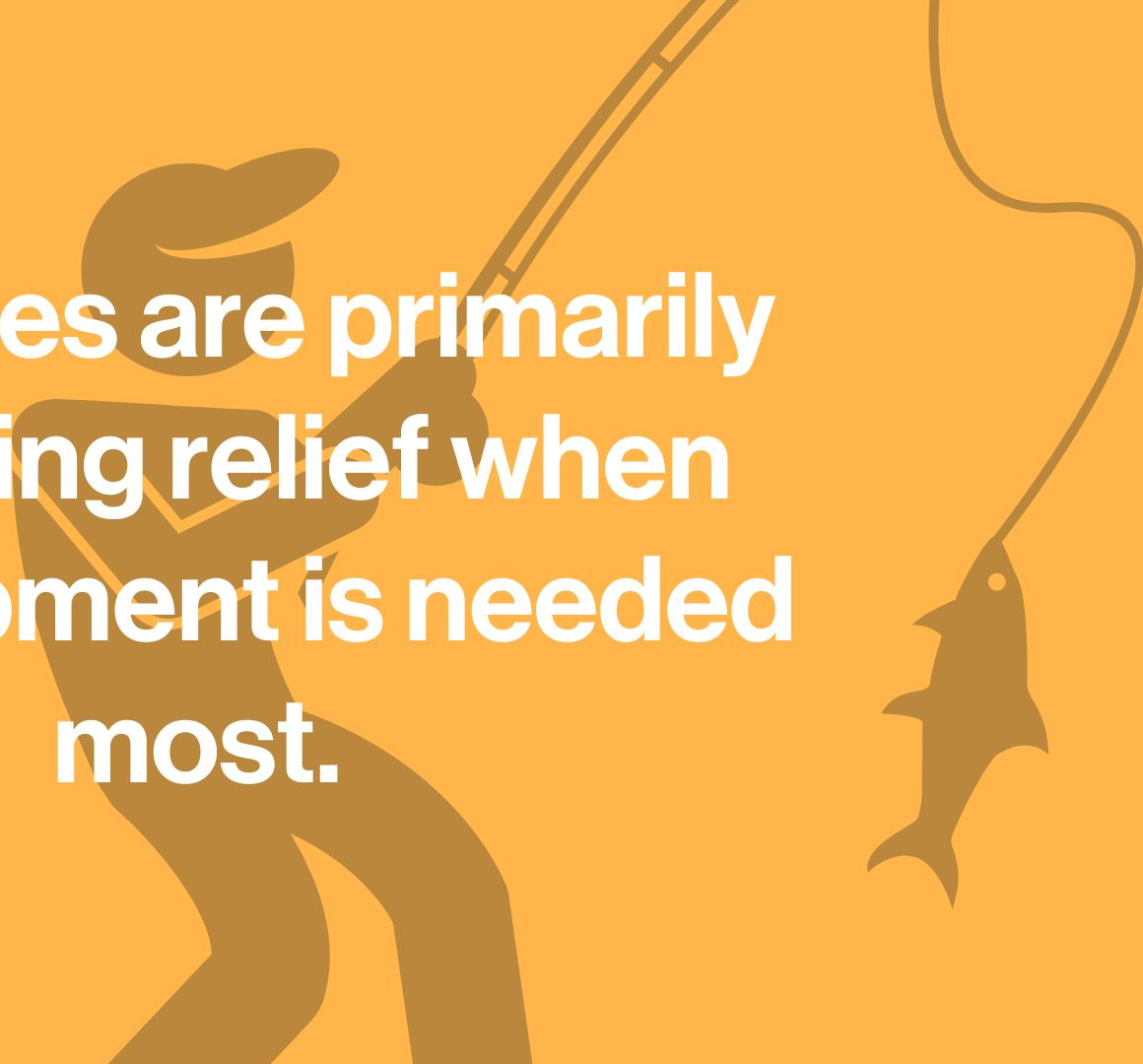
## Reform

providing equal access to good ponds

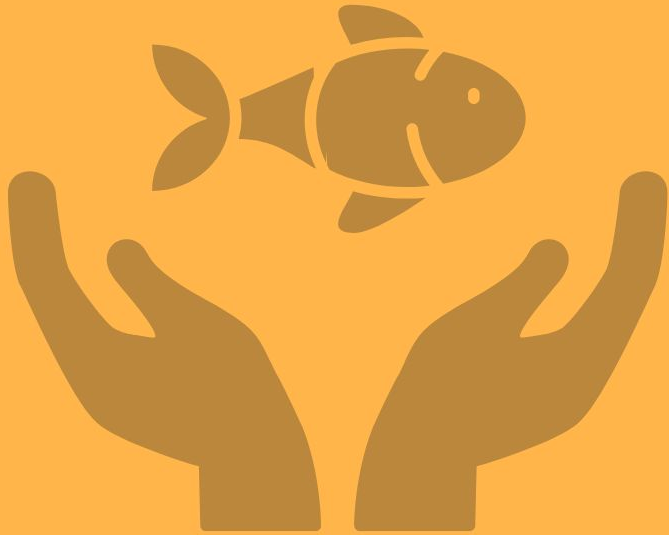
ex: advocacy for more just laws



**Churches are primarily  
providing relief when  
development is needed  
most.**



# relief vs development



the long-term impact

the cost

how it forms us



# the long-term impact

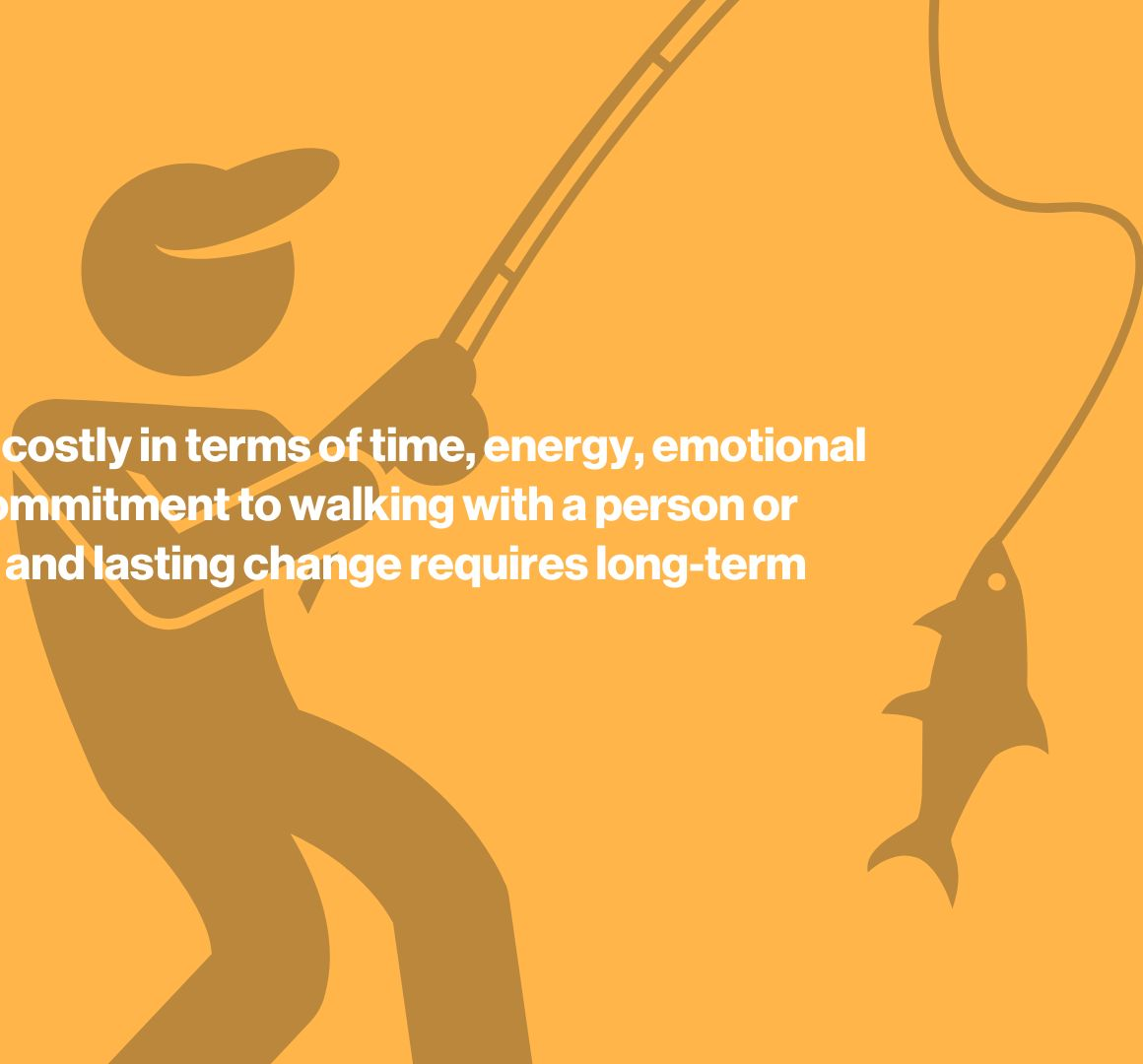


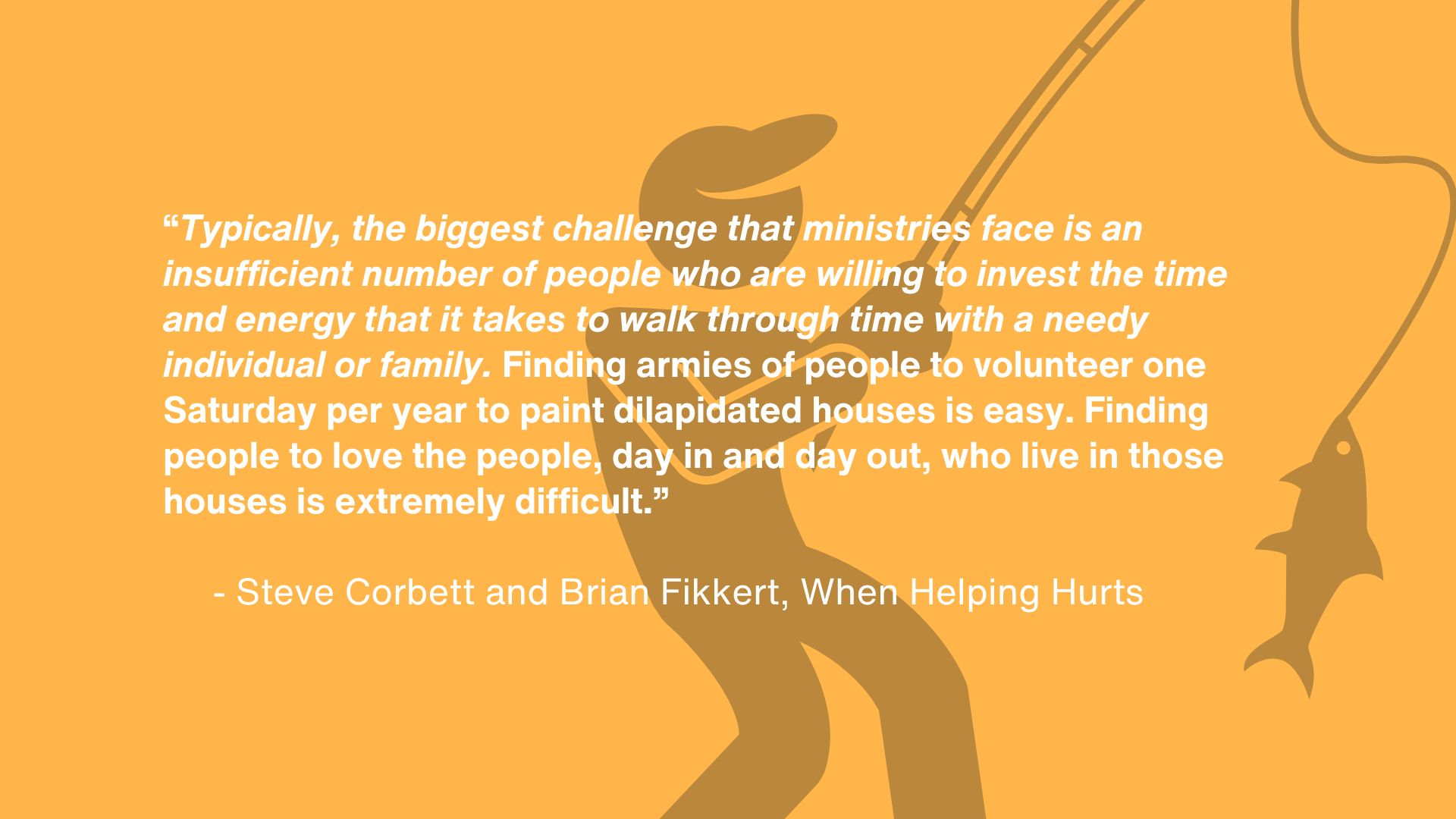
**In the short-term, relief may bring more visible impact while development is slower. But in the long-term:**

- **What the person gets:** Relief feeds a person for a day, while development feeds them for a lifetime.
- **How the person grows:** Relief can create unhealthy patterns of dependency and undermine the person's capacity and dignity. Development helps people grow into what God wants them to be.

# the cost

**Development is much more costly in terms of time, energy, emotional resources, and long-term commitment to walking with a person or community. But meaningful and lasting change requires long-term relationships.**





***“Typically, the biggest challenge that ministries face is an insufficient number of people who are willing to invest the time and energy that it takes to walk through time with a needy individual or family. Finding armies of people to volunteer one Saturday per year to paint dilapidated houses is easy. Finding people to love the people, day in and day out, who live in those houses is extremely difficult.”***

- Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts*

# how it forms us



**Deep relational involvement transforms us much more than simply offering goods and services. As we walk with people from underserved and marginalized backgrounds, the relationship has great potential to deepen the way we know God and transform the way we move through the world.**





# implications for rws

**1) Metric for success: Not the number of volunteers, but the quality of relationships we have with poor and marginalized people.**

**2) Pursue relief efforts only as they lead towards development and relational community.**

# what about reform?

Reform is complex and challenging for churches to get involved with as an institution. If a church were to engage at this level, there are three ways of addressing broken systems:

- 1) Navigate the existing systems
- 2) Create alternative systems
- 3) Reform the current systems





The background features a stylized illustration of two hands, one on the left and one on the right, holding two bowls of soup. The bowls are filled with a dark liquid and topped with several vertical lines representing steam or ingredients. The entire scene is set against a solid teal background. On the left side, there is a white rectangular area, possibly a placeholder for a logo or image.

# from soup kitchen to potluck

**joint stewardship, not paternalistic service**

*\* The language in this section is heavily indebted to the Chalmers Center.*

# potluck



- Identify and value the *assets* of low-income and underserved communities instead of viewing them only through their *needs*.
- Invite the input of poor and marginalized neighbors to develop a *participatory* approach rather than imposing a *blueprint* approach
- A major part of reflecting God's image is to do work that creates value, serves others, and promotes human flourishing. So all neighborhood engagement efforts should be pro *work*.

**“Six years into our global data collection effort, we may have already found the single most searing, clarifying, helpful, world-altering fact. What the world wants is a good job. This is one of the most important discoveries Gallup has ever made.”**

**Jim Clifton, CEO of Gallup**

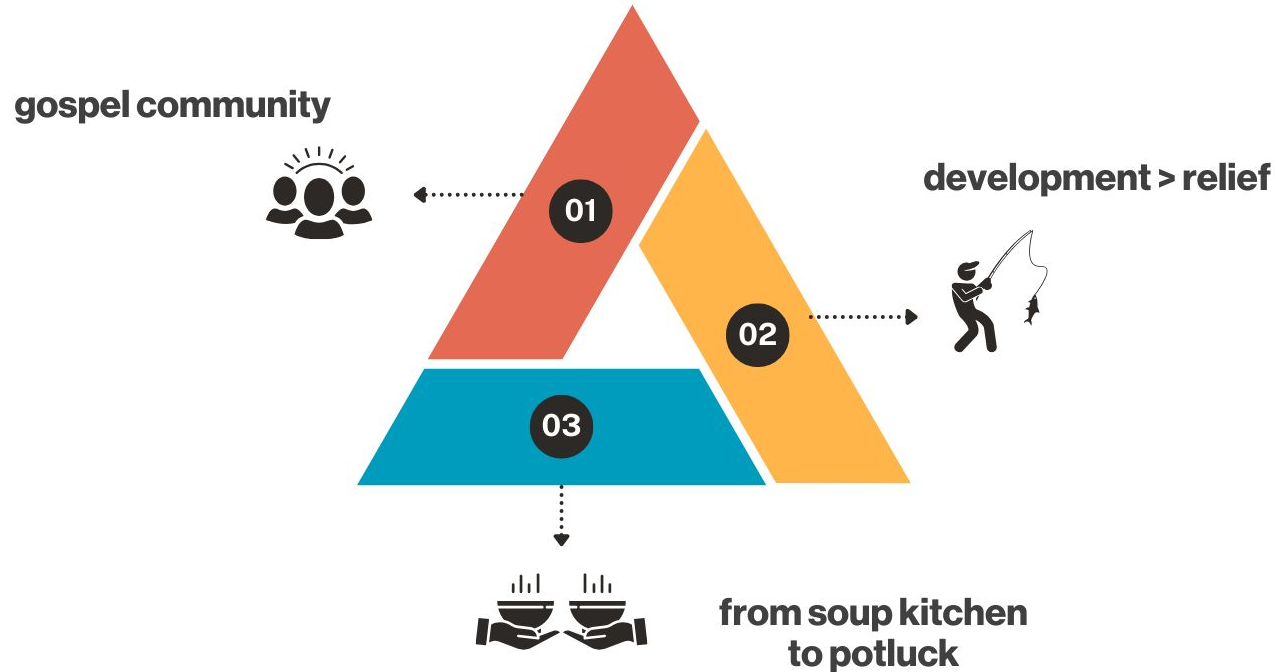


# implications for rws

1) How can we move away from doing things *to* or *for* people to doing things *with* people?

2) How much input are we receiving from marginalized and poor communities about our efforts?

# from projects to presence



**strategy**

**VISION + STRATEGY**



# building partnerships

*“Change moves at the speed of trust.” -Stephen Covey*

**Pursuing the long-term holistic flourishing of the West Side requires building a web of partnerships with community organizations and leaders who have a committed stake in the flourishing of the West Side. These may include: leaders of local housing projects, schools, shelters, city, official, public institutions, non-profits, and ministries.**



**Sign up for our Neighborhood Engagement Newsletter to stay up-to-date on our developing partnerships and service opportunities.**  
**[redeemerws.com/neighborhoodlist](https://redeemerws.com/neighborhoodlist)**

# circles of engagement

**redeemer  
west side**



## **West Side**

- **deep in the neighborhood**
- **owned as a church**

## **City-wide**

- **dispersed throughout the city**
- **sent out as individuals**



# forming a lifestyle of justice

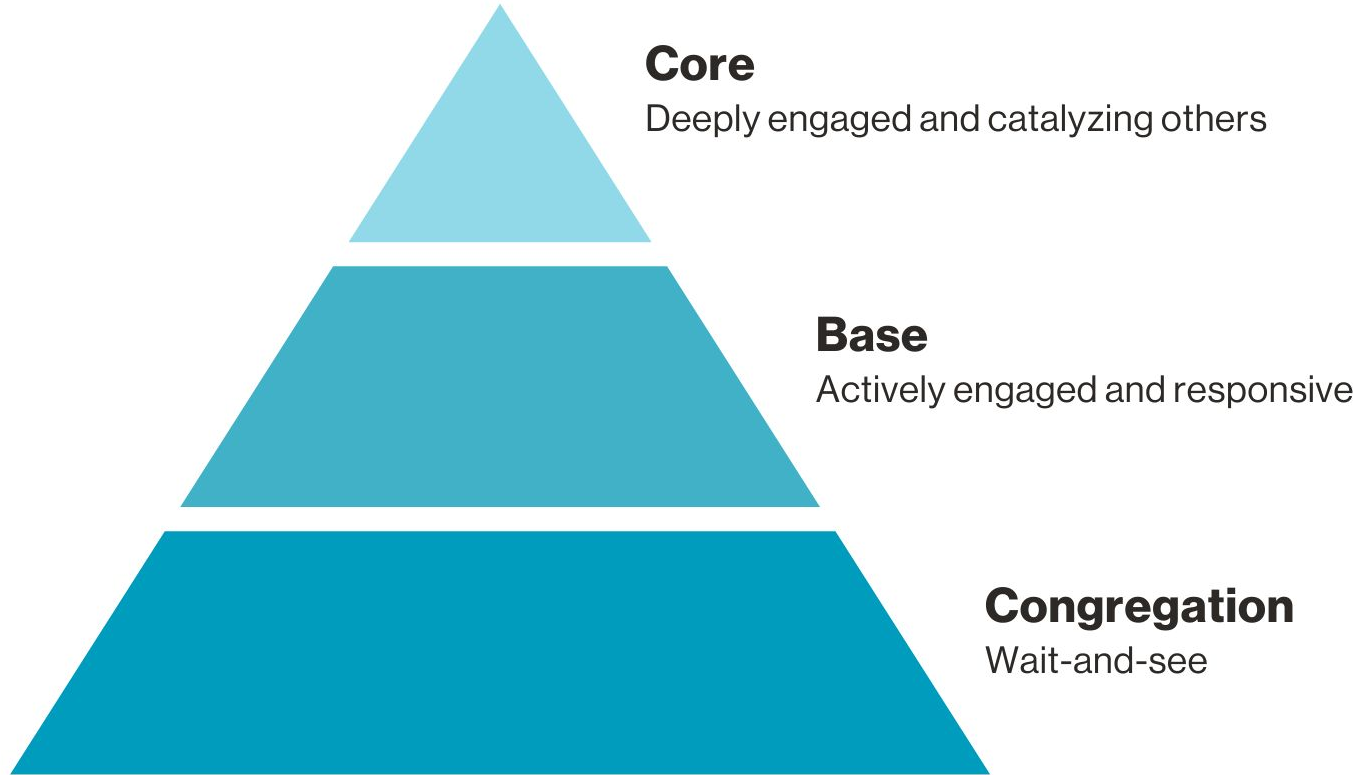
**Beyond the occasional volunteering, how do we become the kind of people who live this as a lifestyle? This will require:**

- **reorienting our lives to make room for people from underserved and marginalized backgrounds**
- **learning to see our communities and workplaces with new eyes**
- **being equipped with tools to design, test, and implement creative new solutions for tangible change**

**Sign up for the Shalom Lab to join a community of people seeking to reorient our life and work toward the holistic flourishing of our city.**

**[redeemerws.com/shalomlab](https://redeemerws.com/shalomlab)**

# Congregational Involvement



# what this vision requires



- **Costly, whole-life engagement from all of us**



- **Adapting our comfort and preferences about the church**



- **Prayerful dependence on God**