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by

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**Hope for the Hopeless: How Rural Churches Can Connect those who are Suffer from Diseases of Despair to Hope in Christ**

**Introduction**

When we think of rural or small-town America, many things come to mind. For some, it is positive thoughts of scenic farmland, wholesome family values and fresh air. For others, what comes to mind is abandoned main streets, and dilapidated homes with rusted out vehicles on blocks in the front yard. There is truth in both. This paper will explore some of the seemingly paradoxical realities of life in rural America and the impact that poverty and a crisis of mental health and substance abuse have had on what was once a picturesque vision of the American dream. We will discuss common rural values and lifeways such as the “bootstrap mentality” and commitment to “take care of our own.” We will consider how a Christian theology of hope might speak to these values, offering both correction and how those same values might be leveraged in our discipleship. We will explore practical approaches the rural Church can take to bridge the divide that exists between those living in rural places and bring the hope of Christ to those who would otherwise be without hope.

**Context and Situation**

In the rural places in view, resources are finite, and loss of hope is pervasive. Those in need of treatment or care must often travel hours away and for many without means, this can often put care out of reach. In towns where care for addiction, mental health and the poor are available, the prevailing attitudes and ideologies can create a stigma that presents another barrier to care. This exacerbates *acedia* in that help seems out of reach and furthers the false narrative that those in need of care are the cause, not the victims of their realities.

Defining rural America is complex. Often when we think of rural areas, we think of geography. We think of farmland, barnyards and small towns with quaint main streets that remind us of a simpler time. We think of cows grazing in pastures and row upon row of corn, soybeans, or wheat. We think of a place. While all these things are part of what define rural America, rural America is much more than just a place. In his book, *God’s Country*, Brad Roth says “rural identity cannot be chalked up to addresses. Rural identity has much more to do with the way rural people experience the world.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

*Personal Responsibility and Self Sufficiency – the “Bootstrap” Mentality*

Rural places are also defined by the attitudes and ideologies of those who dwell in them, and these attitudes and ideologies are often markedly different from those in more urban areas. People in rural places are often connected to them by family, and not just their immediate family but often by generations who came before them. It is not unusual to hear about farms, ranches or businesses that have been “in the family” for hundreds of years. Residents of rural areas often fondly reminisce about growing up on their family farm and have memories of helping their grandparents and then their own parents before inheriting the land for themselves. This land is so much more than land to them. It forms a large part of their identity. It is their past and it is their hope for the future. It is the legacy they hope to pass on to their own children. To them, the land is as much a part of who they are as their family and faith.

But rural places are more than places, family, and land. Years, decades, and centuries of surviving in these places, dealing with drought, floods, and other natural phenomena, being at the mercy of the weather, and living off the land have helped to engrain an attitude of self-sufficiency. Even those living in small towns and working outside of the agriculture sector are often just a generation away from farming, and so these same attitudes and ideologies exist. Each family is expected to take care of themselves and to face the realities of life in rural America with little to no help from the community. Cornelia Butler Flora, Jan L. Flora and Stephen Gasteyer, authors of *Rural Communities*, write that that “lack of material success, such as inadequate income or the lack of a decent home (preferably owned) is viewed as a morale failing. The dominant view is that rewarding such morale failings by providing “handouts” to those out of work or with low incomes should be avoided."[[2]](#footnote-2) This results in a bootstrap mentality that is often something that rural people take pride in and something they feel defines them and their kind.

*We Take Care of Our Own – The Boundaries of Community*

There are notable exceptions to the rugged individualism of the bootstrap mentality. One of those exceptions is when a disaster or tragedy, such as a tornado or an accident strikes the community. In the aftermath of such an event, it is common to see neighbors helping each other with cleanup or delivering meals or provisions. So, in a sense, the bootstrap mentality might be better defined as a mentality of “we take care of our own.” These mentalities are helpful in rural places because they encourage the work ethic that is often necessary for survival in areas where few resources exist. However, this way of thinking can often exacerbate problems and create division. “We take care of our own” becomes problematic when residents of rural areas fail to see their less affluent neighbors as “their own,” instead they are viewed as lazy and a drain on society. Often the poor are judged as either deserving or undeserving. While the young widow left with three children might be viewed as deserving of community assistance, the single mother whose ex-boyfriend is in prison is just seen as someone who made irresponsible decisions. The same can be said for mental health. Often the attitude toward mental illnesses like depression is to ask why the one afflicted with depression doesn’t just “cheer up.” A similar attitude exists for substance abuse, where the person battling this ailment is seen as irresponsible and a burden on society, as well as a danger to others. Sadly, those who suffer from poverty, mental illness or substance abuse are often considered a separate subset of the community, and one that is burdensome and that the rest of the community attempts to ignore and wish out of existence. In their work, *Rural Communities*, Flora et al, note that “despite the stereotype that life in the country is simpler, rural residents face many of the same issues and concerns urban residents do, plus, those related to dispersion and distance.”[[3]](#footnote-3) When we consider the prevailing mentality of self-sufficiency, and the lingering stigmatization of poverty, substance abuse and mental health, along with the lack of anonymity that exists in rural places, these challenges are even more pronounced in rural places. As a result, many believe that there is no opportunity or hope for improving their situation or community. There is no visible reason to believe that tomorrow will be better than today. Instead, many live in yesterday and hold on to nostalgic memories of what life, and their community, once was.

*Hope and Hopelessness*

In these places, there can be a widespread absence of hope . Those who are affluent and healthy see their numbers dwindling, family farms being replaced by corporations, nearby towns hollowed out, beloved local businesses dying, and schools merging. Those who are in poverty, afflicted with mental health ailments or substance abuse find themselves ostracized from the rest of the community, and stigmatized themselves. This is in addition to all the other problems associated with these diseases. The result is that hope seems lost to all. The community suffers from something Roth describes with the help of an ancient word “*acedia*,” which he defines as “a boredom that anchors its gangly roots in the belief that God is not present or at work in the place or life situations we find ourselves.”[[4]](#footnote-4) While many reminisce about the “good old days” of a bustling and robust town square filled with family businesses, and cheering on the local high school that has since closed, they often see no hope of a return of those times and so to them, the future can seem bleak. Their way of life may not be possible for their children and grandchildren, which causes despair. However, in these places community pride is also present. Despite the decline, many still feel proud to be a part of the place or the town and consider themselves fortunate to spend their lives there. Many are steadfast in their faith and see their way of life as more “Godly,” and connected to creation, and so hope does exist. But if these places are to have a better future, they must first seek to accept and understand the issues that plague them, and to see those who are afflicted as their neighbors and as “their own”.

*Diseases of Despair*

The afflictions facing rural places are often the same ones that affect more urbanized areas, the aforementioned mental health and substance abuse issues. These diseases of despair are both causes of and effects of poverty. While these issues are not exclusive to the less affluent, they are certainly more prevalent among those living in poverty, and poverty rates in non-metropolitan areas have been consistently higher than in metropolitan areas for the past 40 years.[[5]](#footnote-5) Further, those in rural areas are more likely to be poor for longer periods of time due to the low wages and often part time nature of rural employment.[[6]](#footnote-6) The poor in rural areas are more likely to be “working poor,” which is the result of too few well-paying jobs in these areas[[7]](#footnote-7). Thus, there is a clear connection between rural places and increased levels of poverty. The connection between poverty and mental health is every bit as clear. Ellen Greene Stewart, in her book *Mental* *Health in Rural America*, writes that “the connection between poverty and mental health is one of the best established in psychiatric epidemiology.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Rural residents are often far more likely to deal with substance abuse than their urban counterparts and rural teens are more likely to engage in binge drinking and getting DWIs8. Despite the well documented prevalence of mental health and substance abuse issues, rural people are far less likely to seek treatment[[9]](#footnote-9). Perhaps not surprisingly, suicide rates are higher in rural areas, and the rates of suicide increase the more rural the area[[10]](#footnote-10). Those in poverty are more likely to have mental health or substance abuse issues. Those with mental health and substance abuse issues are more often impacted by unemployment or underemployment, as well as making poor financial decisions. The result is a cycle that, if not broken, will only continue as these ailments tend to be generational. Rural communities have no choice but to face these issues and provide care to those who are afflicted, as the future of these places depends upon it.

In the forward for Roth’s book, Leonard Sweet writes of “topophilia”, or “love of place.”[[11]](#footnote-11) While *acedia* persists in rural places, there is reason for hope and much to love about these places. There exists in rural areas, a strong sense of community (at least for those who are considered part of the community), an appreciation for hard work and self-reliance, a suspicion of government and outsiders in general than can be both protective and damaging, and a town (or area) pride that includes the geographic location but also family and town traditions and heritage. Many in rural places still attend worship on a regular basis and so “Christian” values are prized, though as we will discuss, it seems that many can be selective about which Christian values they prioritize.

Rural places in America are complex in how they are defined. They cannot be explained simply by geographical location, but by those who inhabit them, their ideologies, customs and traditions. They are places of proud familial and local history, in which there is beauty and faith. And yet, these places are marked by a lack of resources, inclusion, empathy, and hope. Next, we will explore how we can view these complex issues through the lens of scripture and consider what is necessary to implement real and lasting change as we seek to understand where God is calling us and where he is already at world in these places.

**Contextual Theology**

*Hope and Acedia*

While many in these places have lost sight of hope, cause for hope remains. Christ entered a world that seemed also seemed devoid of hope. Many were expecting a Messiah, but few understood what that would mean. God brings hope to unexpected places and in unexpected ways. Therefore we must look for the ways that God is calling us to respond and inviting us to join him in mission in rural America. We must seek ways to bridge the divide between neighbors who fail to see themselves as neighbors.

In his work, *Theology of Hope*, Jürgen Moltmann said

It is the Christ event that first gives birth to what can be theologically described as ‘man’, ‘true man’, ‘humanity’ – ‘neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female’ (Gal 3.28). Only when the real, historic, and religious differences between peoples, groups and classes are broken down in the Christ event in which the sinner is justified, does there come a prospect of what true humanity can be and will be.[[12]](#footnote-12)

It is in Christ that an example is set for us as we seek hope. It is an example of inclusion and disregard for societal and historical norms. It is an example of casting aside our human instincts to gather only with those who look, act, and live like us and to reach across the invisible chasm that exists within communities and to share the love of God with those we might otherwise ignore. It is that love that can cast light upon those living in the dark corners of rural places that many prefer to pretend do not exist. It is that love that might help us come together in our common faith and mutual dependence on one another for a more promising future.

*Shining the Light of Scripture on the Bootstrap Mentality*

Christ, in his ministry, was very clear about the call to care for those in need. Jesus, himself, modeled care for those who were sick (Lk. 4:40), afflicted (Lk. 9:37-42), and hungry (Lk. 9:10-16). And much of his ministry and life happened in rural places. There is no instance of Christ qualifying his love for those who he healed or to whom he ministered. He did not seem to look for the “deserving” sinners. He called Matthew when he was a tax collector, he loved Mary Magdelene when she was possessed by demons (Lk. 8:2), and he fed Judas and washed his feet despite knowing he would betray him (Matt. 26:14-16).

Unfortunately, our feeble grasp of what it means to be a disciple of Christ often includes deciding who we think is worthy of our love and care, and subsequently who is deserving of God’s love and care. This is ironic indeed as the very foundation of our faith includes us receiving the gift of grace that we do not deserve and could never earn, as well as depending on someone (Christ) to pay the price for that gift. To be Christian means to depend wholly on the charitable actions of God because without God, we could never afford the salvation we seek and so desperately need. Yet we tend to question those who we encounter who need our care. We first check to see if (in our feeble minds) that they are worthy of our love and if they are deserving of care. I do not pretend to know where that tendency originated. I know only from where it most certainly did not come, and that is scripture. In rural America, the same mentality of self-sufficiency that has allowed us to survive in harsh conditions for centuries, it seems has led us away from what scripture and our Savior taught us. Flora et al write “specific values that come from religious traditions such as welcoming strangers, concern for the less fortunate or even self interest in clean water, good schools, and functioning infrastructure can be ignored if they are presented as opposing basic rural conservative identity.”[[13]](#footnote-13) While the notion of self-sufficiency can be a positive thing, when taken too far, when we try to rely on our own understanding of who deserves God’s love instead of what God has told us in Christ and in the scripture, self-sufficiency does harm. We are harming those we refuse to love, and we are harming ourselves in that we are missing an opportunity to meet God in mission. Roth writes that “the rural church represents Christ’s commitment to be among all people everywhere.”[[14]](#footnote-14) By this, Roth was referring to the presence of God in these places, but I think that an emphasis can be placed on “all people everywhere.” It is human nature to dehumanize those in need and find reasons to deny them God’s love and care, but Roth would go on to say “The Church takes after its self-emptying Savior and stands in contrast to the logic of the world. The Church follows the logic of the cross.”[[15]](#footnote-15) The logic of the cross makes clear that our place as disciples is to care for and bring to love of Christ to all people, with no regard for who may or may not deserve that love.

In rural communities, there exists a social and cultural divide between those with financial resources and those whose resources are finite, thus there are two communities within the place. Each side fails to see the other as their neighbors, but views them with suspicion, blame and even disdain.

The affluent in these places often see those in poverty as a drain on the community, as lazy and not deserving of care. Of course, they ignore the fact that the community depends upon the contributions of many of those who might not be able to find full time work, but nonetheless perform vital services such as food preparation and service, gas station attendants, farm labor (often season but crucial work), and staffing the local coffee shop, grocery store and Walmart. Despite the need for the labor provided by these less affluent neighbors, the affluent in rural America often strongly oppose low-income housing (even workforce housing), organized labor organizations, addiction treatment facilities or homes, or halfway houses. Flora et al note that there is a strong political ideology in opposition to labor legislation and labor unions,[[16]](#footnote-16) which could potentially provide higher wages, better working conditions and other forms of relief for the working poor.

Those of lesser means have an equally jaded view of the affluent. They often have a negative view of and are uncomfortable around authority figures. They associate such experiences to having things taken away, including their children[[17]](#footnote-17). The despair is exacerbated by a feeling that they have little to no control over their lives. The connection between hard work and wealth seems to them to be non-existent15 and this perception is often correct. This results in difficulty for those in this situation to even dream of something better. Instead, the legacy they wish to pass along to their children is simply to stay safe, find work, and stay out of trouble[[18]](#footnote-18).

In the fourth chapter of John’s Gospel, Christ encounters the Samaritan woman who the Israelites would have viewed in a similar way, but his counter-cultural actions bridged the divide, and he reached out to her despite the cultural stigmas. How can the church encourage rural communities to do the same, and overcome the divide between the haves and have nots? How do we overcome this chasm that exists between these groups, that live in the same place yet seem to live in different worlds? These are the questions we must seek to answer if we want to have any hope of healing these wounds and restoring a sense of community in rural America.

*Seeking the Shalom of the Place*

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God had these words of instruction for the Israelites who were exiled. “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”(Jer. 29:4-7) It is fair to say that we can draw a comparison to the situation that both the affluent and those in poverty find themselves in rural America. While not in exile, and while the geographical location is the same, much has changed to make it often as unrecognizable as a foreign land, just like the Israelites and Babylonians, the healthy and affluent find themselves together with those who are less fortunate, in this unfamiliar place. They have mutual goals, and their futures are intertwined. As in Babylon, either side could rebel against the other, but their connected futures means that such rebellion endangers both groups. Without the essential services provided by the laborers, the affluent, for all their wealth, would be without basic needs. The community also depends on the financial contributions of the affluent for basic services, schools, roads, and police/fire services. Rural Christians must seek the shalom of their communities—the welfare of all in that place—just as the Israelites were commanded to do by God’s message through Jeremiah. We must find peace and live with one another, work with one another, and love one another, so that all can prosper.

*Acedia*

Roth describes *acedia* as “the great scourge of our age, the especially deadly sin of rural communities.”[[19]](#footnote-19) *Acedia* seemingly runs rampant in rural places. In the rural poor, despair is the norm and their more affluent neighbors’ empathy has become calloused and qualified; most are quick to name the reasons why the poor or afflicted (mental health, substance abuse) are undeserving of care. The irony for Christians is that we are the beneficiaries of undeserved grace but are often unwilling to give the same. Paul writes in Ephesians chapter two that we are saved by grace through our faith, and he describes how this is not our own doing, but a gift from God, so that no one may boast. With this in mind, how must the church change its response to those in need of care in rural places? Paul writes in Romans twelve, “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” In response, the church can work to guide God’s people to care for those who are suffering and to help them find the same patience, hope and faith that God has given us.

**Practices of Hope**

*Bridging the Divide*

The church in rural America is perhaps the only institution remaining that may have enough gravitas from either side of this chasm to have any chance at bridging the divide. The work will be painstaking. As we labor to heal years of hurt, we must understand that it will take time. We must look for ways that God is already at work and seek to join Him in mission. Allen T. Stanton in his book *Reclaiming Rural* calls this work “cultivating the Kingdom of God” and about this he says “cultivating the Kingdom of God can be a slow process as well. Congregations should begin this work with the assets, strengths, and resources they uncovered as they begin to realize where God is at work.”[[20]](#footnote-20) Stanton reminds us, as the church, that God is already at work in these places and that we should seek to join God’s work as “junior partners.”17

To begin this work, and to learn where God is working in our community, we must reach out into the community and interact with our neighbors, including those with whom we might not normally associate. Stanton says that our ability to announce the Kingdom of God begins “first in the ability to recognize that our community engagement is in fact an act of spiritual obedience, and that through that work, God is drawing us closer to God’s self.”[[21]](#footnote-21) With this in mind, I believe that the first thing we must do is to go out into our community and make friends. This means reaching out to see what work is already being done in the community. One way to do this is to speak with local church leaders and non-profit organizations**.** As we engage with our neighbors, and cultivate relationships, we begin to see God at work. In my own experiences, I have learned of many initiatives and ministries that are actively working to provide care to those in need and share the love of God. These people were unknown to me before I made the effort to seek them out. We can find where God is at work by simply engaging those in our community who are actively seeking the shalom of the place.

The next step is to evaluate the currently available community resources against what is needed. A good way to do this is to host community forums which connect those in the community with available resources. Quite often, I have found, many are unaware of what resources exist and how to access them. Once you have a sense for the availability of resources and understand the need in the community, you can begin to see where those resources fall short and what additional resources may be necessary to meet the needs of the community. The next steps will depend on where the current resources are falling short and what resources are needed. Often, due to the constraints of rural places, you will need to engage outside help from larger cities to bring relief to those in your community.

In a similar sense, all too often, evangelism is seen (and treated) as a sales process. We reach out to others in the hopes of convincing them to join our church, or at least “a” church. However human beings are naturally resistant to being sold anything and we certainly should not evangelizing with any intent other than to make disciples or seeking to quantify our results in the work to which God has called us. When we examine the ministry of Christ, we see that he connected with people, he didn’t try to sell them anything, he went out and made friends. Likewise, we must train rural congregations to rethink their approach to evangelism and making disciples. Instead of seeking to grow the church, we should first attempt to get to know our neighbors in order that we might love them as Christ commanded. We must work to understand who they are and the problems they face.

I have found a good place to start is with Deacons, who are often charged with providing care but also might subconsciously have a paternalistic or condescending view of those they serve. We must shine the light of scripture upon that and train them to see humanity in those in need. We must teach them to truly care about their neighbors, not just provide care and this can only happen as they learn about them and forge relationships with them. By forming such relationships in the community, and truly connecting with people and most importantly, seeing them, we can begin a process wherein conversations about faith will naturally occur. These efforts must cross divides, be they financial, cultural, gender or otherwise. As we begin to see each other as human beings, we may begin to break down barriers and build bridges as we truly connect with one another. Only then can we hope to make connections and make disciples. The church must have a perduring presence in the community, not only hosting events and opportunities for human connection, but also by attending and supporting other events in the community to show support, especially events that will potentially connect those who are otherwise divided.

One of the first difficulties we encounter in this task is finding events in our communities that naturally draw people from all walks of life together. In some communities, this might be the church. In others, it might be the local high school football game. All too often, even at events where these sides naturally come together, you might find that they are seated separately or on opposite sides of the room and avoiding interaction with one another. Our role must be to bring them together. To help them see the humanity in one another, to help see Christ in one another, and to help them understand that not only do they have similar problems and obstacles, but that they also share common hopes, a common community and a shared future. If we are able to achieve some level of social connection across boundaries, we can begin to break down the dehumanization that was enable each side to see the other as a foe. When each side looks at the other, it is the face of Christ that should be reflected to them. When this happens, God often brings hope to where none seems to exist.

*Offering Hope to the Hopeless*

When Jesus met Mary Magdelene, it is no leap to say she was without hope. She was possessed by not one, but seven demons. It is reasonable to believe that her tortured soul could not envision anything beyond the world of fear and pain in which she was seemingly trapped. It is just as reasonable to believe that had Jesus not intervened, she would have likely been ignored or even shunned by all. But Christ’s love is inclusive and brings hope where none existed. Thus, the cure for *acedia* is the love of God. The church must lead by example and care for those who are in need, whatever the need might be in the community. This might include learning to help those who are battling addiction, caring for those with mental illness, feeding or clothing the poor, or anything that provides care for those who would otherwise be ignored or marginalized. We must respond to those who will inevitably cite reasons for not helping by pointing them toward the scriptures and specifically to the ministry of Christ. We must push back against the narrative of the deserving and undeserving poor or afflicted by loving them all as precious creations of God. These ministries may be enormous in their scope as the need, and the division, in many communities is great. This is where we must leverage the “bootstrap” mentality and rural tendency to “take care of their own” by first redefining “our own” in a new light, and in consideration of what Jesus teaches us and then “getting our hands dirty” by meeting God in mission in our communities. The rural work ethic is strong, and once we have determined where God is already at work and what we are being called to do, the next step is to roll up our sleeves and point that tireless diligence toward God’s mission. Despite this work ethic, forged by centuries of families laboring in unforgiving places, I have found that many will hesitate to take on projects that seem daunting or tackle problems that seem too big but those are often what God is calling us to address. This is not out of laziness but instead is born of intimidation and a sense of practicality. We determine what we can do based upon our own capabilities or what we have always done in the past. We must learn to overcome our own perception of what is possible, remind ourselves of God’s providence and be bold in our ambitions and efforts, remembering that it is God we are relying on and not our own abilities. When we do so, we can often redefine what is possible when we begin to do the work that God is calling us toward.

Stanton argues for a theology of evangelism that is “inherently practical.” One that “lives and moves and is best understood when it is seen in the local community.”[[22]](#footnote-22) I could not agree more with this approach, and I recognize that I am practical to a fault. At times I might forget that first step, the one that requires that we pause to understand where God is what work, to see what scripture has to say about what it is we want to do, to seek what God is calling us toward. Practicality is a virtue, but we must not be so practical that we forget about our faith lest we make the same mistake as those who are qualifying those in need, we become dependent on our own desires and abilities instead of relying on God. Good theology must be the prerequisite for the practical work that God calls us to do. Once we have done that work, we must act. All too often churches, and other groups make the mistake of spending far too much time talking about a problem and all the ways they would like to help. Sadly, in many cases, no actual work ever takes place. Matthew 7:17 says “Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.” It is an unfortunate fact that much of the fruit of well-meaning Christians dies on the vine because no actions come from their good intentions. It is crucial to understand how scripture informs what we do, as well as where God is at work, but once we do it is equally as important to get down to the work we are called to do.

**Conclusion**

However, you want to phrase the attitude of self-sufficiency found in rural places, whether we call it the “bootstrap mentality,” or the commitment to “take care of our own,” it can be viewed in a negative or even selfish light. However, there is beauty in it. These rural places are not afraid of hard work; in many ways, it defines them. Many are willing to do whatever it takes to help their neighbors, at least those they consider to be their neighbors. For that reason, we must redefine what it means to be a neighbor, gratefully, Jesus has already done this for us. We must re-write the narrative based upon the human perception of who is deserving of God’s love, and we must rewrite it in light of the scriptures and the work of Christ. We must make the effort to understand where God is at work in these communities, but once we do, we ourselves must get down to work. We must get our hands dirty, and we must encourage others to do the same. To do that, we will need to leverage the powerful work ethic that already exists. We will need to do turn that same attitude of self-sufficiency back toward the community and show them how God wants to leverage that work ethic and our abilities. It begins with connections, bringing people together who would not be otherwise and showing them one another’s humanity. It begins by making friends.

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