

THE SHALOM REPORT

The State of Community Health
in Memphis, Tennessee

DECEMBER 2010



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Thanks to all (and there were many) who contributed to this project — even more thanks to all who love and serve our city.

— The Shalom Memphis Board

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Our City: Memphis

Memphis is a delightful place to live, work, recreate, and rear a family. We love the charm of our riverfront, our quaint neighborhoods, our expansive green-space at Shelby Farms, and our growing suburbs. We take pride in our national award-winning zoo, our NBA basketball team, our world-class hospitals, our vibrant businesses, our great university and colleges, our Civil Rights Museum, and our many historical sites.

We are grateful for our rich Delta culture, for Beale Street and the Stax Museum, for our excellent art museums, for the Orpheum, and for the growing ethnic diversity that has always characterized our city. With all of our charm and all of our assets, we are also deeply aware of our profound problems. For many years our violent crime rates, high school dropout rates, unemployment rates, poverty rates, infant mortality rates, and childhood obesity rates have been among the highest in the nation. Many of our public schools struggle to survive. Our population has been in decline for more than a decade. The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. still rests on our collective conscience, and we continue to experience the heartache of racial discrimination and the public distrust engendered at times by race-based politics.

Memphis is blessed with some outstanding institutes who research and analyze our problems and propose creative solutions: Memphis Bioworks, Operation Safe Community, Memphis Fast Forward, KIPP Memphis, the Urban Child Institute and many others. There are generous foundations that fund many of our efforts to tackle our biggest problems: the Hyde Family Foundation, The Assisi Foundation, The Community Foundation, The Hope Foundation, the Poplar Foundation, the Kemmons Wilson Foundation, and others. There are scores of groups, public and private, who actively engage our various social needs: The Boys and Girls Clubs, the Church Health Center, MIFA, a network of Community Development Corporations, The Salvation Army, and many, many others. Truly, without these agencies, Memphis would be a very different place.

Additionally in Shelby County there are more than 2,000 churches, six synagogues, four mosques, and nearly 200 parachurch organizations many of whose mission is to serve the poor and dispossessed in our city.

Memphians on the average give twice as much to charity as the average American, and 80% of our giving stays in Memphis.

With all of these charitable assets, it sometimes mystifies us that we seem to make such slow progress. We are committed, however, to continuing our service to the under-resourced and distressed people of our city, as we continue to search for more effective and creative ways to help.

In Shelby County there are more than 2,000 churches, six synagogues, four mosques, and nearly 200 parachurch organizations many of whose mission is to serve the poor and dispossessed in our city.

The purpose of this report is to speak primarily to the Bible-believing church community. We want to propose some new and creative approaches to serving our neighbors in deepest need – some strategies that we believe should lead to substantial progress in the years and decades ahead. We are Christians who share a common faith in Jesus Christ and a commitment to the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God; we also love our city and want to cooperate and participate with others who want to promote the welfare of Memphis. We believe there are many things we can all do together; and there are some things that Christians and other religious groups need to do on their own. There are other projects that need to be led by Christian parachurch organizations, with the churches helping with finances and human resources. There are some projects that need to be led by the churches, with the parachurch organizations coming alongside with their expertise and ministry networks. We hope this report is also helpful to non-Christian agencies and individuals who may hereby glean some important information or be prompted to consider some new approaches. We all need to work together for this city we love.



Our Strategy: The Shalom Project

Those who know and love Memphis well often remark that one of the keys to improving our city is to mobilize and engage the “faith community” in our efforts. At the same time, however, no one seems to know exactly how to do that.

In many ways, the faith community is already at work: as individual church members we are school teachers, policeman, judges, and doctors; we serve on the staffs of charitable organizations; we give enormous amounts of money to those same organizations; we are the neighbor next door who takes in a foster child, who votes in local elections, and who helps a battered woman. As churches, however, we often don’t know exactly how to combine our resources and coordinate our efforts for maximum results.

For the “resource churches,” the greatest collection of expertise, experience, and passion for the poor is often to be found in our Christian parachurch partners. Memphis may have more outstanding Christian parachurch organizations per capita than any other city in the world. Sometimes, however, these organizations are not communicating or collaborating effectively with each other, and, generally, their work is sustained by large infusions of cash from mostly Caucasian, suburban churches whose members do not live within the neighborhoods being served. At the same time, many of the local churches whose buildings are in distressed urban neighborhoods consist mostly of members who drive in for Sunday morning worship from outlying neighborhoods, naturally making the congregations less concerned for the neighborhood immediately surrounding the church building.

The Shalom Project is designed to help the churches address all of these concerns. Here are our major premises:

What Memphis and every city needs is “shalom.”

The word shalom appears in the Old Testament over 250 times. Its New Testament equivalent occurs over 90 times. The definition of shalom is well-being, prosperity, health, fulfillment, completion, with regard to one’s environment, one’s own soul, and one’s relationships with his/her neighbor; but the Scriptures make it abundantly clear that at the very heart of shalom is a reconciled relationship with God Himself through faith in the crucified and risen Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Shalom includes both spiritual and physical well being.

We believe there are at least nine categories of community life that contribute to shalom:

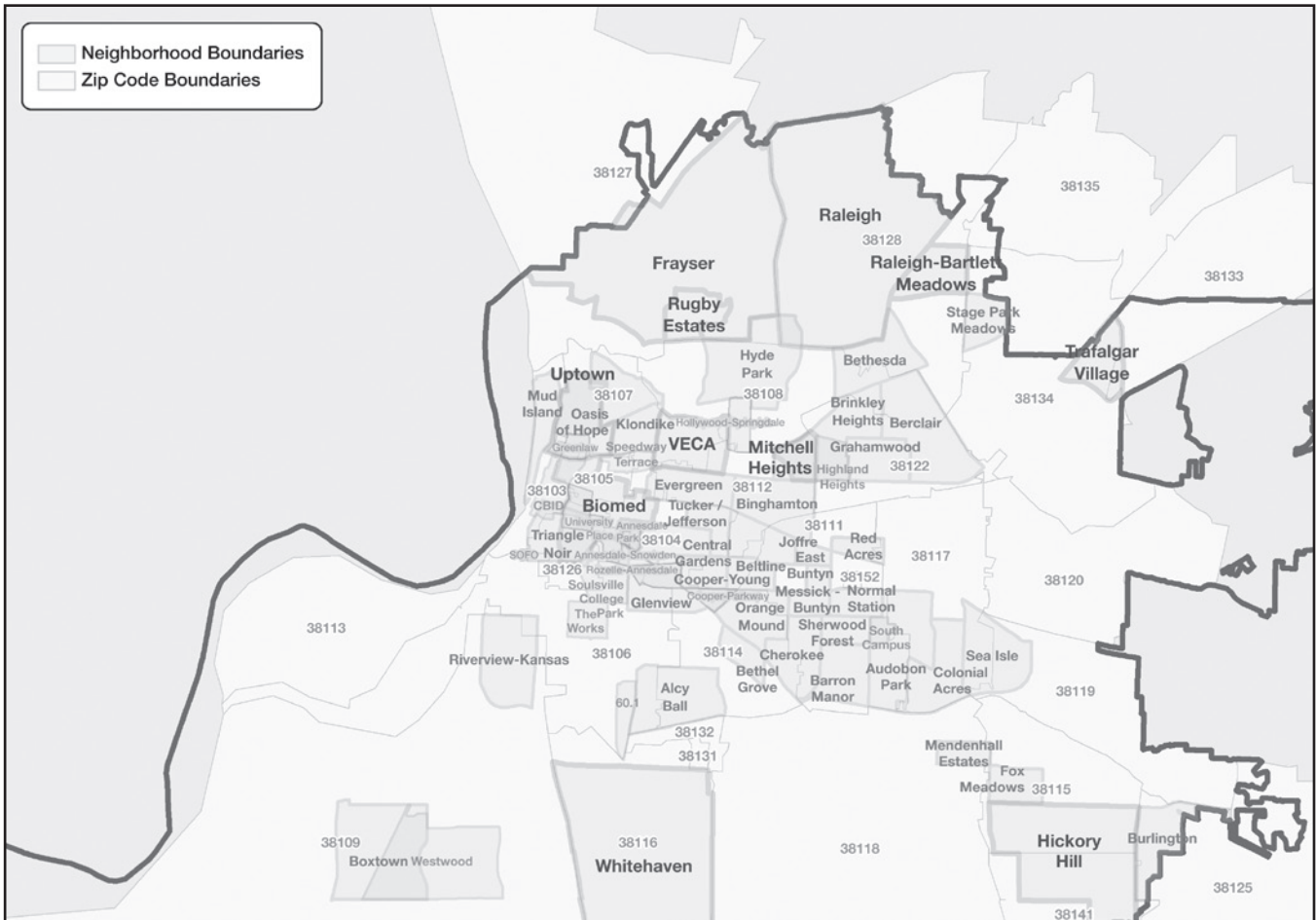
- Spiritual Life and the Church
- Public Safety
- Family Life
- Education
- Health
- Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
- Economic Development
- Community Involvement and Leadership Development
- Arts and Entertainment

At the very heart of shalom is a reconciled relationship with God Himself through faith in the crucified and risen Messiah, Jesus Christ.

In order for Memphis to experience shalom, all our neighborhoods must experience shalom.

If any of our neighborhoods were not healthy in any of the nine categories listed above, we would say that they are in need of help. Using census tracts, the Center for Community Building and Neighborhood Action (CBANA) out of the University of Memphis has categorized 127 “neighborhood zones” based on the three focus areas that affect the nine categories above: unemployment, earned income tax credit (EITC) filings and sub-prime loans. Thirty-seven of our neighborhood zones are considered “vulnerable,” as the actual numbers are at a pivotal point, which could shift positively or negatively, predicated upon the type of influences asserted. Fifty-six of the neighborhood zones are called “distressed,” for they are in significant deficit in all three categories. They, obviously, deserve our immediate, focused attention.

Map A: Memphis



The center of shalom in every neighborhood is the local, neighborhood church.

This is perhaps the controlling idea in The Shalom Project. While we believe strongly in the ongoing necessity of government agencies, non religious-based NGOs, interfaith organizations, and Christian parachurch organizations (see our suggested collaborative strategies in “Call to Action”); the heart of our strategy is the development of “Shalom Project churches” in all of our neighborhoods, especially the vulnerable and distressed neighborhoods. These churches need to be planted or revitalized, then positioned as the hub of our efforts to bring shalom to the neighborhood, then resourced properly to fulfill their mission.

The reigning model in most neighborhoods where Christian mission work is occurring is as follows: One or more parachurch organizations perceive needs in a neighborhood, they develop a strategy, ask (largely suburban) donors to fund them, and ask neighborhood churches to help them.

The parachurch organization governs the ministry and stays as long as they have funding to support the staff and operations in that neighborhood.

Here, on the other hand, is The Shalom Project model: While other agencies and organizations continue their strategies and expand their ministries, the Christian churches together look at the needs of our neighborhoods and decide which ones call for our ministry action. We then research the neighborhood to see what churches might serve as future Shalom Partner churches. We decide either to help these churches or, if there are none available, to plant one or more churches. We then approach our parachurch partners who provide the services that are most needed in the neighborhood and ask them to partner with the Shalom Partner church in the neighborhood to begin a branch of their ministry under the eventual direction of that local church or its community development corporation. In this way 1) all of the ministries begun in the neighborhood will automatically be integrated under

one governing umbrella; 2) there is an “exit strategy” for all those who minister from outside the neighborhood, as leadership for every ministry will eventually be developed from within the local church; and 3) all outside partners will eventually divest themselves of all ownership so that the ministries are eventually wholly owned and governed by people in the neighborhood.



Shalom partner churches must be holistic, outwardly-focused, neighborhood-based, Bible-believing, Christ-centered, effectively governed and disciplined churches, and resourced by sister churches of similar character.

The key to The Shalom Project strategy is the development of healthy Shalom partner churches. Each word in our description of a Shalom partner church is vital to the success of The Shalom Project:

Holistic

Committed to the integration of word and deed – both the proclamation and the demonstration of the Gospel (in all key study areas of The Shalom Project).

Outwardly-Focused

Committed to the service of non-members – especially those in need of shalom – and to their full inclusion into the fellowship of the church.

Neighborhood-Based

Made up largely of people who live in the neighborhood and committed to every aspect of the neighborhood’s welfare.

Bible-Believing

Believes in the infallibility of the Scriptures and submits to its authority in all areas the Bible addresses.

Christ-Centered

Believes and teaches that Jesus Christ, God incarnate, is the only way to salvation through faith in His shed blood on the Cross, in His bodily resurrection, and in His second coming.

Effectively Governed and Disciplined

Committed to biblical governance, with clear and fair procedures, without unhealthy nepotism; and committed to biblical discipline among its members.

Resourced by Churches of Similar Character

Partners with resource churches who hold all of the above commitments.



Our Conclusions: Need + Resources + Church = Opportunity

After two years of study, we discovered many things about our city, about the efforts being made by many people and organizations, and about the great opportunities for the churches to serve and make a difference. Here is how we might summarize it:

The needs in Memphis are profound and call for the sustained and focused attention of the church.

From almost every angle, we are in dire need. Each of the components of shalom is in severe deficit in fifty-six of the 127 CBANA neighborhood zones in Shelby County, and thirty-seven are in some deficit. Virtually all of the resource churches reside in one of the twenty-seven “stable neighborhoods of choice.” According to 2009 population estimates, 87% of Shelby County’s population resides in neighborhoods that are in need of greater shalom.

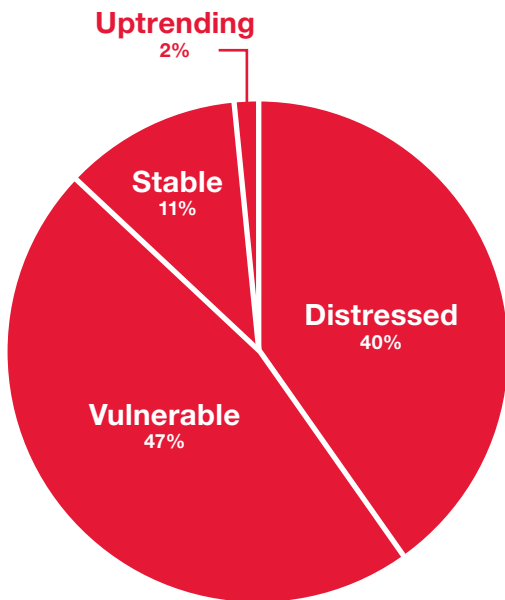
The people and organizations in Memphis who are aggressively serving our distressed people are generally very high-caliber people.

They are smart, well motivated, and have fairly clear and effective strategies. We are blessed to have them. We need to work more closely with them, help them network with each other, and together develop strategies to serve our most-distressed neighborhoods.

There are scores of resource churches that are eager to make a difference in Memphis and who want to be partnered effectively with neighborhood churches.

These resource churches are already involved in many ways in seeking the shalom of our city. We need to call together these resource church leaders, work collaboratively to serve the city, network better with non-church agencies, and together with our neighborhood church leaders, develop a Master Plan to bring shalom to Memphis.

**Distribution of Shelby County
Population by Neighborhood Zone**



Source: CBANA/Geolytics 2009

[See Map B: Memphis Area Neighborhood Zones \(p. 69 in the appendix\)](#)

Agencies and Organizations currently supported by Shalom Partner Churches as of November 2010

Agency Name	Director	Ministry Neighborhood Focus	Ministry Principle Area
Advance Memphis	Mr. Steve Nash	38126	Economic Development
Agape Child & Family Services	Mr. David Jordan	City Wide	Family & Children
Bethany Christian Services	Ms. Elizabeth Burton	City Wide	Community Health
Brinkley Heights Urban Academy	Mr. Tim Cox	38122, 38112, 381088	Education Related
Calvary Rescue Mission	Mr. Bob Freudiger	City Wide	Mercy Ministry
Christ Community Health Services (Families Matter)	Mrs. Carol Jackson And Mr. Burt Waller	City Wide	Community Health
Child Evangelism Fellowship Of Memphis	Ms. Janie Walker	Berclair Elementary And Kingsbury	Education Related
Christian Medical & Dental Association	Dr. Ken Nippert	City Wide	Education Related
Christian Psychological Center	Dr. Brent Stenberg	City Wide	Community Health
Church Health Center	Dr. G. Scott Morris (Kevin Roehl)	City Wide	Community Health
Citizens For Community Values Of Memphis	Mr. George Kuykendall	City Wide	Community Health
Discipling Men, Inc.	Mr. Don Riley	City Wide	Family & Children
Economic Development Ministries	Mr. Jim Kennedy	City Wide	Employment Related
Eikon Ministries	Mr. Roy "Soup" Campbell	Binghampton, Orange Mound	Family & Children
Emmanuel Episcopal Center	Rev. Colenzo Hubbard	38126	Family & Children
FCA (Fellowship Of Christian Athletes)	Mr. Larry Coley	Memphis City Schools	Education Related
For The Kingdom	Mr. Howard Eddings	City Wide	Family & Children
JIFF	Rev. Rick Carr	38106, 38107, 38108, 38112, 38114, 38117, 38122, 38126, 38127	Mercy Ministry
Knightlife, Inc.	Ms. Eva Miller	38122, 38118, 38111	Family & Children
Life Choices, Inc.	Ms. Sue Parker	City Wide	Community Health
Love In Action International	Mr. Tommy Corman	City Wide	Community Health
M.A.R.R.S.	Mrs. Bridgette Bowman	City Wide Juveniles Ages 8-17	Mercy Ministry
Memphis Athletic Ministries	Mr. Gib Vestal	City Wide	Family & Children
Memphis Leadership Foundation	Mr. Howard Eddings, Jr.	City Wide	Family & Children
Memphis Union Mission	Mr. Steve Carpenter	City Wide	Mercy Ministry
MCUTS	Mr. Rob Thompson	City Wide	Education Related
MIFA	Ms. Linda Marks	City Wide	Mercy Ministry
Multi National Ministries	Ms. Laurie Graves	City Wide	Family & Children
Mustard Seed, Inc.	Pastor Noel Hutchinson	38126	Economic Dev./Education/Family Life
Neighborhood Christian Center, Inc.	Mrs. Ephie Johnson	City Wide	Family & Children
Neighborhood Housing Opportunities	Mr. Howard Eddings, Jr.	38107 And 38114	Neighborhood Restoration
The Neighborhood School	Ms. Tari Harris	38111	Education Related
One By One Ministries	Mrs. Celia Stoneking/Mrs. Carey Moore	38128	Family & Children
Orange Mound Outreach Ministries	Mr. Reggie Tucker	38114	Family & Children
Palmer Home For Children	Mr. Jonathan Ahern	Tri-State	Family & Children
Refugee Empowerment Program	Mrs. Camela Echols Blackmon	City Wide	Family & Children
Redzone Ministries	Mr. Howard Eddings, Jr.	38111, 38115, 38108, 38128	Family & Children
Repairing The Breach	Pastor Tony B. Wade	38114	Family & Children
Salvation Army	Major Mark Woodcock	City Wide	Mercy Ministry
Second Chance Prison Ministry	Ms. Barbara Dycus	West Tn And Tallahatchie County	Mercy Ministry
Service Over Self, Inc.	Mr. Philip Walkley	38122, 38112, 38114	Neighborhood Restoration
Streets Ministries	Mr. Ken Bennett	38126	Family & Children
Su Casa Family Ministries	Mr. Tim Jewitt	Hispanic Families 38122 And 38111	Family & Children
Teen Challenge Of Memphis	Mr. Jonathan Lindberg	City Wide	Community Health
Victims To Victory	Dr. Kitty Lawson	City Wide	Mercy Ministry
Y-MOT Outreach Ministries, Inc.	Mr. Patrick Simmons	38116	Family & Children
Young Life Memphis Metro	Mr. Brad Baker	City Wide	Family & Children
Young Life Memphis Urban	Ms. Danita Calhoun/ Mr. Jonathan Torres	Memphis City Schools 38104, 38116, 38107, 38122	Family & Children
Youth Striving For Excellence	Mrs. C. Pearl Lee	38108, 38127, 38112, 38128	Family & Children
Youth Leadership Of Memphis	Mr. Steve Taylor	38126	Family & Children
Youth Visions	Mr. Marron Thomas	38127	Family & Children

Our Mandate: A Call To Action

In light of the love of Jesus Christ for the hungry, the homeless, the heartbroken, the imprisoned, the widowed and orphaned, and the lost; and in light of His Great Commission to make disciples of all peoples; we commit ourselves to the ministry of Jesus Christ in Memphis, and we call upon all of our sisters and brothers in Christ to join us in bringing shalom, in all of its aspects, to our great city.

We believe in the institution of the Church, which God Himself established as His enduring community to proclaim and to demonstrate the Good News of His Kingdom. We are committed to the establishment, the maturity, and the expansion of His Church in every community. We call upon the Church in Memphis to unite our hearts in mutual love and service and to work together to build His Church in every neighborhood in Memphis that we might bring shalom to all her citizens.

Join Shalom Project and collaborate with us, sharing your church's missions ideas, strategies, and plans for the future.

We are grateful for all of our brothers and sisters who work among the distressed and dispossessed people in our city, and we renew our commitment to pray for them and to resource them and to work effectively with them to accomplish their mission. We call upon them to continue and to expand their ministries and also to assist the churches in establishing vibrant “shalom” churches in every neighborhood in Memphis and to work with us to make these neighborhood churches the leaders of spiritual life, of holistic compassion, and of Christian discipleship in their neighborhoods.

The Resource Churches

We are grateful for the many good works being performed by so many outstanding churches in Memphis and for the high level of commitment and missiological sophistication among many of our church leaders. Our hope is that The Shalom Project will in no way undermine or impede our existing ministries and partnerships, but rather will encourage and expand them.

At the same time, we would encourage all of the resource churches in Memphis to consider the following initiatives:

- Communicate regularly with your congregation, especially the leaders, a deep love for Memphis and appreciation for her many assets, the need for shalom in Memphis, and the specific realities revealed in this report.
- Join Shalom Project and collaborate with us, sharing your church's missions ideas, strategies, and plans for the future; and coordinate your church's efforts with that of sister Shalom Project resource churches in addressing all the needs of the neighborhoods in Memphis.
- Work with The Shalom Project director to identify a distressed neighborhood where your church might be able to make a difference, and consider partnering with a neighborhood-based church and perhaps other resource churches and parachurch partners to accomplish Christ's mission there.
- Work with The Shalom Project director to find parachurch partners with whom your church can collaborate to serve our city.
- Work with The Shalom Project director to ensure that your church is committed to the standards of a Shalom Project church as outlined on page 7.

The Neighborhood Churches

We are most grateful for our brothers and sisters who serve in local churches in our most vulnerable and distressed neighborhoods. These choice servants face the daily challenges of a congregation and a community in constant need of life's necessities in the midst of a city with many resources. All Christian leaders in Memphis have much to learn from these men and women.

We have found that these leaders have been greatly encouraged by the idea of The Shalom Project and are eager to see it implemented. The Shalom Project partnerships will not be easy: Resource Churches will be hungry for quick, visible results; Neighborhood Churches know that's not how it happens. Resource Churches will want to develop a plan; Neighborhood Churches will want to develop relationships. Resource Churches will tend to think about budgets; Neighborhood Churches will think about people. Resource Churches will want to visit; Neighborhood Churches will want to be friends, etc.

In spite of the challenges and the tensions, we believe these partnerships are essential to the experience of shalom in Memphis, and so we encourage those who are or would be Neighborhood Churches to:

- Communicate regularly with your congregation your love for Memphis, your gratitude for her many assets, your commitment to see all the people in our city experience God's shalom, and your belief that all of Memphis's believers need to do this together.
- Join The Shalom Project and collaborate with us, sharing your community's needs, your church's ideas, strategies, and plans for the future.
- Work with The Shalom Project director to identify a Resource Church or churches with which you can partner, using The Shalom Project model.
- Work with The Shalom Project director to identify parachurch partners who can help you serve your community in a variety of ways and in accord with The Shalom Project structure.
- Work with The Shalom Project director to ensure that your ministry and your church are committed to the standards of a Shalom Project church, as outlined on page 11.

The Parachurch Organizations

We thank God for the incredible array of ministries and the virtual "army" of Christian servants found in the parachurch organizations in Memphis. Every aspect of shalom listed on page 9 is served by these organizations. For many years they have served as the hands and feet of Jesus and the representation of Christ's Church among our most distressed citizens. We need their ministries to grow and to deepen and to become even more interconnected with one another. We also need to connect them better with Memphis's Resource Churches in order for them to receive more prayer support, financial support, and personal involvement.

We encourage our parachurch partners to consider adding to their existing ministries this Shalom Project strategy:

- Join The Shalom Project. Share with us your knowledge, your ministries and your plans for the future.
- Work with The Shalom Project director in resourcing our pilot projects with your ministries under The Shalom Project philosophy of Local Neighborhood Church leadership.
- Work with The Shalom Project director to identify new Resource Church partners for your ministry needs.

The Shalom Project Board

The purpose of The Shalom Project over the next three years will be:

- To gather information about needs in our vulnerable and distressed neighborhoods, potential leaders in Neighborhood Churches, the ministry engagements and future plans of Resource Churches, and the ministry needs of Parachurch Organizations; and to communicate with all partners.
- To network all of our churches and Parachurch Organizations for meaningful ministry partnerships.
- To initiate and facilitate The Shalom Project pilot projects (3 per year for 3 years) in vulnerable and distressed neighborhoods.

Our Findings.



In 2007 we established a Shalom Project Board of Directors, consisting of the following members:

Dr. Frank Anderson
Mr. Pradip Ayer
Dr. JoeAnn Ballard
Pastor Greg Diaz
Dr. Gary L. Faulkner
Ms. Sharon Fields
Mr. Eddie Foster
Pastor Ernie Frey
Mr. Terry Hoff
Dr. Sammie Holloway
Rev. Noel Hutchinson
Pastor Jerry Ivery
Mr. Larry Jensen
Pastor Robert Jones
Ms. Rhonda Logan
Pastor Bryan Loritts
Mr. Eli Morris

Dr. Steve Marcum
Mr. Tom Marino
Pastor Keith McCarty
Dr. James L. Netters
Pastor Keith Norman
Rev. Preston Poindexter
Pastor Richie Sessions
Mr. Drew Sippel
Rev. Dr. Melvin S. Smith
Dr. Stacy L. Spencer
Pastor Melvin Watkins
Mr. Phil Weatherwax
Dr. Dandridge Wilborn
Dr. Trennie Williams
Pastor Sandy Willson
Mr. Fenton Wright

Each of the pastors on our Board gave us his/her blessing to recruit members from their church to serve on teams who would study the health of our city in each of the nine areas we defined. Each team was asked not to do original research, but to find the best available data in their area, identify the areas and neighborhoods of greatest need, report the current work already being done, and suggest where the greatest opportunities are for the church to serve. They were also asked to list resources for further study. Larry Jensen agreed to serve as chairman of the steering committee, made up of the leaders from each of the teams.

What you find on the following pages are the results of these teams' efforts.



Spiritual Health and the Church



Public Safety



Family Life



Education



Health



Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization



Economic Development



Community Involvement and Leadership Development



Arts and Entertainment



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Spiritual Health and the Church



Spiritual things are notoriously difficult to measure. Whether we speak of individuals or communities, the core of spiritual life is the heart, which remains largely invisible to others.

We can, however, observe various behaviors that we know are largely influenced by one's spiritual vitality: divorce rates, births to unwed mothers, violent crimes, abortions, truancy rates, performance in school, evidences of racism in business ownership and political rhetoric, and personal bankruptcy rates. We can also attempt to evaluate the presence and effectiveness of churches and parachurch organizations, as difficult as this might be.

The Shalom Project encourages all Shalom Project partners to take a critical look at each neighborhood they intend to serve and to answer questions like these:

- What are the evidences of spiritual unhealth in this community?
- What needs are the most pressing ones in this neighborhood?
- Who are the Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and parachurch organizations here?
- What needs is each one meeting?
- Are they well run?
- Who are the neighborhood churches?
- How would these churches be evaluated in the following areas?
 - Preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ and the Bible
 - Making and multiplying disciples
 - Holding members accountable for walking with the Lord
 - Serving the needs of the surrounding neighborhood
 - Integrating word and deed inside the church and in the community
 - Developing local leadership for church and community
 - Praying diligently for the well-being of the neighborhood
 - Including in its membership all ethnic and socio-economic groups in the neighborhood
 - Requiring its leaders to lead godly lives
 - Cooperating with other churches, agencies and organizations

In any case, we must all face this stark reality: the distressed neighborhoods in our city wouldn't be distressed if they were spiritually healthy and if they had spiritually strong churches. There are neighborhoods in our city that are not "distressed," yet are still in need of stronger, healthier churches. There are no distressed neighborhoods that are not in need of stronger, healthier churches. This is not solely their fault nor is it solely the responsibility of the residents in our distressed neighborhoods. Our point is that we share this burden together. We all have a responsibility to bring shalom to every neighborhood.

We all have a responsibility to bring shalom to every neighborhood.

Our observation has been that with all of the virtues we see in our churches, we are suffering in the following areas:

- The suburban churches are often "cocooned," isolated, and uninformed in a relatively comfortable suburban life, or their efforts to help vulnerable and distressed neighborhoods are lacking vitality and strategic focus. These problems often stem from a negative view of the city and its vulnerable and distressed neighborhoods.
- The "successful" urban churches are sometimes not sufficiently concerned about the distress in their own and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Struggling urban churches in vulnerable and distressed neighborhoods are generally under-resourced and sometimes fail to address adequately the moral, spiritual, and relational issues underlying many of the problems of their members and their neighbors.

- The Church in Memphis – urban and suburban, black and white, rich and poor – is in need of spiritual revival, theological renewal, moral reform and missional revitalization.
- The churches in Memphis are still largely segregated by race and socio-economic categories.
- Parachurch organizations sometimes duplicate ministries and fail to collaborate effectively with local churches.

We believe these things can change, and we strongly encourage church leaders to read our report, consider our “call to action,” and join us in the effort to bring shalom to every neighborhood in Memphis.

Public Safety



Crime is a problem in most major metropolitan areas in our country. According to *The State of Literacy in America*, in large metropolitan areas where school dropout rates are the highest, there is a corresponding increase in the rate of crime. As a city with one of the highest crime rates in the nation, Memphis is no exception to this trend.

Following this trend, upwards of 80% of all juvenile crime committed in Memphis is by high-school dropouts. It is easy to see how public safety and education are linked. Therefore, public safety is a forefront issue on the minds of citizens and educators in all parts of the community.

In Memphis, newspaper headlines and local nightly news constantly repeat the sad stories of crime and its devastating impact here. Criminology experts warn us that city-to-city comparative crime statistics can be very misleading because of the absence of reporting uniformity across the nation, but crime data and statistics, whether moving up or down, mean little while the perception remains that Memphis is a dangerous place to live, work, and play.

The shalom of our city is affected by fears and worries about criminals outside our homes who create and sustain a scarcity of peace inside our homes and on the streets of our neighborhoods. Some elderly citizens live in crime-riddled neighborhoods and have become virtual prisoners incarcerated behind barred windows of their own homes. Children cannot play safely in the streets of their own neighborhoods. To be sure, gunshots ring out day and night in the streets of certain neighborhoods, but they seem to echo much farther by creating the sense that the city as a whole is far from safe. Yet it does remain true that in many neighborhoods, people have lost hope that anything can be done to stop crime. They feel a constant threat to their sense of safety and well-being.

Fred Smith, Chairman and CEO of FedEx Corporation, appeared before the Memphis City Council on April 21, 2009 and talked about the issues he thought needed to be addressed to make Memphis a better city. He told them, “If you are unable to provide a safe environment for people to live and raise their families, conduct their business, the rest is a distant second.”

Several years ago, through a robust public-private partnership, law enforcement agencies, business leadership, and local government leadership launched a program called Operation Safe Community, which is a 15-point strategy to reduce crime in the greater Memphis area through strategies and programs such as Cyberwatch, Operation Blue Crush, and the Real Time Crime Center.¹ Memphis Police Department Director, Larry Godwin, highlighted Memphis’s progress in dealing with crime, in *The Commercial Appeal* on April 26, 2009:² “There has been a 10% decrease in all reported crimes from 2008 to this year and a 15% drop since 2006.” Even more encouraging is that from January 2009 to January 2010 there was more than a 30% decline in crime in Memphis.

Some elderly citizens live in crime-riddled neighborhoods and have become virtual prisoners incarcerated behind barred windows of their own homes.

Even with this encouraging reduction in crime and trends, crime remains a significant problem. Research has demonstrated that Memphis has a criminal population of an estimated 50,000 people. According to a March 11, 2009 report by WMC TV, most of the 50,000 criminals are repeat offenders and have been arrested six or more times. The Shelby County Sheriff reports that 84% of the jail population is comprised of repeat offenders. Repeat offenders who have become, for all practical purposes, professional criminals, commit many of the violent crimes. When one considers that approximately 1.3 million people live in the Memphis region and less than 4% of the population creates an “unsafe” environment for everyone else, it is somewhat frustrating that law enforcement and

government cannot solve the problem. Law enforcement professionals have recently demonstrated that smarter, data-driven policing methodology, inter-agency cooperation, and more officers in better-equipped squad cars can reduce crime. In addition, tougher state sentencing and gun laws to address the professional criminals' jail time, better jails, and better re-entry programs would be an additive to fighting crime and reducing recidivism. Anecdotally, law-enforcement professionals will immediately say their day-to-day work addresses crime and criminals way "downstream" and that unless serious and sustained efforts address the crime and its causes at its origins and mitigate the contributing factors, they are fighting a losing battle. Their consensus opinion is that there cannot be enough police cars on the streets or enough prison beds provided to accommodate the flow of criminals.

Law enforcement professionals believe that the faith community must be involved if crime is to be attacked effectively at its sources. In general, public safety is about maintaining citizens' sense of well-being in the face of harm, either natural or man-made. Homes and neighborhoods should be safe havens, and the underlying belief of citizens about the problem of crime is that any crime is too much and the threat of danger or prevalent fear jeopardizes "daily shalom."

We believe that crime has its source in the basic sin nature of man. Whether rich or poor, black or white, and no matter what ethnic or cultural background, all are potential criminals and can easily harm others out of hearts of selfish intent. Hearts must be changed from within in order for the destructive behaviors to change, whether in the urban core neighborhood or the most affluent suburb.

Public Safety Challenges

The broken nuclear family is a primary cause in the creation of a crime-producing environment. That is, a broken or weakened nuclear family suffers greatly from other contributing factors to high-crime rates, including lack of education, lack of job preparedness, the quality (or complete absence) of prenatal care, and poor health care during and immediately after childbirth.

The breakdown of the nuclear family has increased the attractiveness and viability of gangs as a surrogate family environment.

This brokenness contributes to what might be termed an underlying and insidious generational loss of hope. In our community there are many single mothers as head-of-household, raising children who then become mothers while still children themselves. These girls are most often ill-prepared to raise children from conception to birth to young adulthood. As young teenage mothers, they are especially ill-equipped to attempt to overcome multi-generational poverty. It is not hyperbole to consider these young women as orphans themselves, orphans who have become social widows raising another generation of orphans. Add the negative influences of gangs and related activities, and the formula is deadly for the children of our community. This confluence of negative factors has created a whole class of at-risk kids who are, for all practical purposes, orphaned by life circumstances rather than by the absence of parents.

Ultimately, the destruction and breakdown of the nuclear family has increased the attractiveness and viability of gangs as a surrogate family environment—especially for at-risk kids in the core city. Children, male and female, are drawn to gangs by a show of support they are not receiving from any other source, particularly from a male authority figure. Gang organizations intentionally seek to increase revenue by exploiting youth either as members or victims. Gangs offer a substitute form of family life with rules, boundaries, belonging, and identity. Ultimately, gang life leads to criminal activity and a lifestyle that is destructive, demeaning, and most difficult to escape.

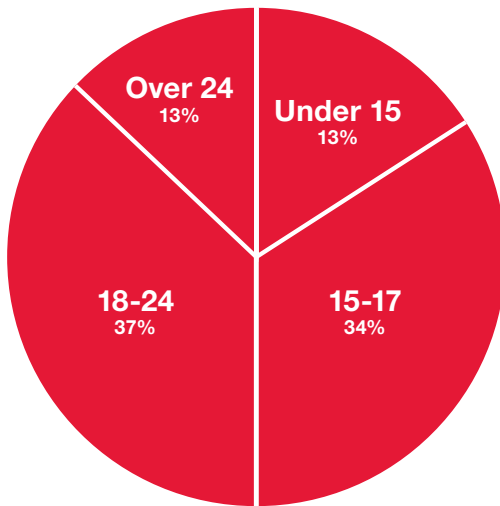
In the July/August 2008 *Atlantic Monthly* article "American Murder Mystery," Hanna Rosin reports:

"Gang leaders, cut loose from the housing projects, have adapted their recruiting efforts and operations to their new setting. Lately, they've been going after "smart, intelligent, go-to-college-looking kid[s], without gold teeth and medallions," said Sergeant Lambert Ross, an investigator with the Memphis Police Department. Clean-cut kids serve the same function as American recruits for al-Qaeda: they become the respectable front men. If a gang member gets pulled over with guns or drugs, he can hand them to the college boy, who has no prior record. Also, national statistics show 50% of gang members are under the age of 18, and 87% are under the age of 24."³

Other related factors contribute to higher violent crime rates among the poor and under-resourced people of any

community, including poor city planning and housing policies. In too many cases the victims of crimes are poor, under-resourced citizens who are easy targets for criminals in neighborhoods that are violent hotbeds for such activity. Victims can also be family members, friends, or relatives of the criminals. It is a known fact that in most homicides the victim could have just as easily been the perpetrator and it is highly likely that the victim and the perpetrator already knew one another.

Gang Membership by Age



Source: National Youth Gang Survey, 2004

Crime can be greatly reduced if a strategy is developed to keep kids from entering into the pipeline for training in a criminal lifestyle.

Community-housing policies authorized demolishing blighted housing in the core city areas where crime was concentrated and rampant. However, government-housing policies, which removed people from concentrated areas, dispersed those housing-project residents across large areas of the city. Housing policies did not address the impacts of the dispersion of these concentrated criminal elements into a much larger geographic area. Police and community agencies were not prepared for new challenges resulting from these public housing policies and thus have worked feverishly for the last several years in an attempt to catch up. Based on research by University of Memphis criminology professor Dr. Richard Janikowski

and University of Memphis sociologist Dr. Phyllis Betts, the crime in Memphis has migrated from a crescent once running from the city's northwest to southwest to more of a northeast to southeast crescent. Many of the city's poor previously living in public housing projects just north and south of downtown Memphis have migrated to other areas of the city. While the number of crimes may have declined, the number of people affected has increased. This migration has also affected the administration and distribution of city services to the poor, given the larger geographic areas services now must try to cover.⁴

Anecdotal information suggests that participation by core-city kids in one of the at-risk kids' programs or ministries creates an improved high-school graduation rate. Currently, the overall graduation rate in Memphis City Schools is approximately 60%. Kids involved in the afterschool programs for several consecutive years across the city demonstrate a high-school graduation rate of greater than 90%, with many cases of 100% graduation. Most of the organizations interviewed can show that very few, if any, of their participants end up involved in crime and the criminal justice system.

Crime can be greatly reduced if a strategy is developed to keep kids from entering into the pipeline for training in a criminal lifestyle.⁵ Currently, the general population of incarcerated inmates in the Shelby County Jail exceeds 2,500, most of which are African-American males.⁶ Further inquiry suggests that 95% of those inmates do not have a high school education and greater than 70% have some type of learning disability. The door cracks open for gang recruitment when the child begins to realize in elementary school that he cannot read and there is no one there to help and encourage him through the learning difficulties. The child becomes discouraged and defeated, and by middle school drops out and may land in a gang, where acceptance and identity are offered in exchange for a form of indentured servanthood.

Therefore, if the general population of core-city kids are suffering from poor high school graduation rates, which increases the likelihood of exposure and engagement into criminal lifestyles and activities, and at-risk kids' ministries and agencies enjoy a graduation rate among their participants of greater than 90%, it seems reasonable that an all-out effort to scale up the at-risk ministries—utilizing the expertise of the parachurch organizations and within the context of the neighborhood church—could possibly



eradicate the supply line for gang membership at the source and eliminate or at least substantially mitigate crime. As the fundamental problem is these children living in broken families, the clear call for the church is to step into the gaps and care for these “orphans” by providing a surrogate family based on the love of Jesus Christ, instead of allowing their lives to fall prey to the cheap counterfeit of being “valued” as gang members.

Public Safety Assets

Stepping into the gap can occur as early as conception to address prenatal issues focused on brain development. Programs already underway, such as One-by-One Ministries, train volunteers from local churches to minister to families through a unique outreach program designed to mentor expectant mothers and new parents.

The clear call for the church is to step into the gaps and care for these “orphans” by providing a surrogate family based on the love of Jesus Christ.

Another means of changing the course of entire lives exists in the many secular and faith-based organizations that offer kids a positive alternative to gang membership. Currently in Memphis there are more than 140,000 at-risk kids. There are approximately 20 different organizations offering these kids a positive alternative, and it is estimated those organizations are reaching approximately 40,000 to 50,000 kids each year.

Informed, connected, and involved citizens dramatically extend the effectiveness of crime-prevention services and law enforcement. The Memphis Police Department has more than 2,400 uniformed officers to enforce the law within the Memphis city limits. That is one patrolman for every 347 people in the city, or six per square mile. As Matthew J. Simeone, Jr., points out in *Homeland Security Affairs Journal* (Supplement No.2: 2008),⁷

“By engaging citizens and involving them in the issues that affect their communities, keeping them informed about what is happening where they live or work, and then allowing them to network between themselves, internet technology can be used to leverage the private sector as both a force multiplier and a vast potential source of information.”

Effective Programs

Several effective programs exist with a relatively low cost for delivery and implementation. However, there has not been concerted or concentrated effort to implement these programs, and often there has been a lack of even minimal resources, volunteers, advocacy, and persistence. Recently, for example, the State of Tennessee passed legislation to address blighted properties and absentee landlords. This legislation has real power and can force absentee landlords to either repair the property or potentially lose ownership to condemnation. These laws require a specific step-by-step process, which is not widely known yet does not require tremendous effort or cost. When a landlord is required to forfeit ownership, perhaps such a property could be demolished and along with other vacant lots in the area turned into vegetable or flower gardens for the neighbors. Study after study has demonstrated the effectiveness of a no-tolerance policy for “broken windows.” The “broken-windows” theory and research demonstrates that the presence of broken windows, untended yards, gang graffiti, broken-down cars and the like creates an environment upon which the criminal element will capitalize. Addressing minor property issues correlates to a reduction in crime in a neighborhood.

Another example of an effective program is Crime Stoppers. Crime Stoppers is an absolutely confidential crime-reporting system, whereby an informant reports criminal activity to the nonprofit organization, which then reports the information to law enforcement. Many times this vital information is about criminal activity within a given neighborhood or family. Many under-resourced citizens are reluctant to report crimes because they fear such reporting is not confidential and thus their lives could be at risk. Training could easily be done, perhaps in the neighborhood church, about the safety and security of reporting crimes to Crime Stoppers.

Neighborhood Watch programs require organizational efforts. The watch programs are very common in resourced neighborhoods. This program empowers people to think about how they can keep an eye out for each other and then report questionable activities through Crime Stoppers.

Many times young boys become involved in crime yet never comprehend the true implications of a life of crime. Rather than rehabilitating the offenders, encounters with the criminal justice system greatly increase the likelihood of these young boys being hardened by the system and made angrier. In most cases, the environment of incarceration does not change them for the better but makes them worse.



At present, diversion programs exist for felony offenders, which basically offer them “hard” jail time or alternatively suggest voluntary entry into a program intended to divert them from following a path of crime, and these programs can be faith-based. After many years on the street in criminal and gang activity, a young man, especially in his late 20’s, awakens and realizes there is no future and no hope and further realizes danger is ever-increasing on the streets.⁸

Clearly, it makes sense that the neighborhood church, in cooperation with parachurch ministries, could be a safe haven for those young men who are looking for a way to escape a criminal or gang lifestyle.

Either before entry into criminal lifestyle or as an attempt to exit such a lifestyle after incarceration, opportunities must exist to offer true rehabilitation. In one police precinct in Memphis there are more than 9,000 parolees living in that one geographic area.⁹ Scripture clearly mandates that followers of Jesus need to visit those in prison. It makes sense that the neighborhood church, in cooperation with parachurch ministries with expertise in the area of re-entry, could be a safe haven for those young men who are looking for a way to escape a criminal or gang lifestyle.

Recommendations:

The church should engage in the mentoring of pregnant teens.

Training could be provided to churches to mentor pregnant teens as well as young women with children up to the age of three for the purposes of educating young mothers and families about the growth and development of their babies, improving the parenting skills of this generation to affect the next, and preventing child abuse.

The church should elevate awareness and involvement in at-risk kids’ programs.

In one pilot neighborhood a partnership might be established among a resource church, a neighborhood church, and parachurch ministries to demonstrate an all-out effort to touch the lives of all kids in that geographic area in hopes of demonstrating what hope, love, and caring can do to change the course of a life. This is not a speculative pursuit without successful precedent in parachurch ministries and organizations. Placing the neighborhood church at the center of this type of initiative might offer the opportunity to ultimately scale this already proven approach to reach all kids in the core city. This is a worthy call to the church of Memphis.

The church should inform and empower citizens in under-resourced neighborhoods.

Perhaps the neighborhood church could hold seminars to train people on code enforcement, Crime Stoppers, and Neighborhood Watch. Resource churches could help facilitate and encourage training and provide consultancy and assistance to the neighborhood church on how to empower the local people to implement these simple approaches to “taking back the neighborhood.”

For information about Crime Stoppers, contact Buddy Chapman at (901) 525-5122. Contact your local MPD Precinct for information on Neighborhood Watch.

The church could review the feasibility of diversion and re-entry programs centered in the neighborhood church.

In cooperation with the court system, professionals with expertise in dealing with criminal diversion and re-entry programs, the parachurch ministries with similar expertise, and resource churches, a comprehensive pilot program centered in a neighborhood church could be developed to give young people and parolees hope for a real future as contributing members of the community.

Conclusions:

An army of church members throughout the city of Memphis await the call. Church members greatly exceed the population of habitual criminals. The Shalom Project should explore church-sponsored programs for repeat offenders, including re-entry skills training, mentoring and counseling, basic job training, and life skills. Existing parachurch ministries with a focus on the population of people involved in the criminal justice system should be engaged to discuss how site-based work in neighborhood churches could be developed and enhanced. A pilot project should be developed to match the resources of outside volunteers with a neighborhood church passionate for those with criminal backgrounds and an experienced parachurch organization in a neighborhood where a high concentration of repeat offenders resides.

Memphis's youth need daily programs, role models, and authority figures to step in where gang members are currently filling the gap. We should explore mentorship, accountability, and "foster-father" programs to address this need at the neighborhood church level.

Neighborhood churches are well positioned to be a hub for community engagement. As a first priority, knowledge of the existence of no-tolerance policies for lack of code enforcement and blighted properties needs to reach the poorest and worst neighborhood in Memphis. We should explore partnerships with law enforcement, law firms, crime-watch organizations, clean-the-streets organizations, and city services that would be beneficial for all, with the goal of improving the physical landscape and environment of each neighborhood in Memphis.

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- 1 www.operationsafecommunity.org
 - 2 Commercial Appeal, April 26, 2009
 - 3 Atlantic Monthly July/August 2008 article, "American Murder Mystery"
 - 4 Dr. Phyllis Betts, sociologist, University of Memphis
Center for Community Building and Neighborhood Action, It Takes a Village Report
 - 5 Dr. Richard Janikowski, criminologist, University of Memphis
 - 6 Shelby County Government Office of the Mayor
 - 7 Homeland Security Affairs Journal (Supplement No. 2: 2008)
 - 8 National Youth Gang Survey, 2004
 - 9 <http://www.state.tn.us/correction/newsreleases/pdf/prisonstrategicplan.pdf>

Family Life



The family is the single most influential component social unit in life. Every country in the world shares the concept of family in its societal definition. Of course, the differences across national lines contribute to the uniqueness of each society. Yet the family is the primary venue where beliefs and behaviors are learned and expressed to shape the fundamental thinking and values of an individual.

In America, the traditional definition of family is parents and children residing together in the same household. While this remains the case, fewer families than ever have both parents in the home. In 1970, 85% of our nation's children lived with both parents, but that percentage decreased substantially over the years until 1996, when it stabilized near 68%. Since 1960, the percentage of births to unmarried women has increased from 5% to 37%. These national trends have been found to have a correlation with the number of children who experience significant financial challenges, have lower educational levels, and rely on public assistance.

The child's opportunities that exist for society are closely tied to the family unit being intact and providing a nurturing and productive environment for children.

The challenges for families nationwide are not any different for the households of Memphis. Memphis is the largest city in Tennessee, with an estimated 158,455 families, 250,721 households, and 2,327.4 people per square mile.¹ The health and stability (or lack thereof) of these families is no doubt a contributor to many of Memphis's greater problems and an indicator of the overall health of our community. The Shalom Family Life committee sought to examine the state of our city's families, determine what factors are influencing their health and development, and define the challenges faced as a result.

Challenges:

After examining various factors that impact families, the Shalom Family Life committee identified poverty as the greatest challenge facing family life in Memphis. By-products of this fact can be seen in family structure and education.

Poverty

The most recent census report (2000) stated the poverty level for families in Memphis was at 17.1% overall;² at 24.4% for families with children under the age of 18; and 31.0% for families with children younger than 5. The numbers were greater in single-parent households, at 33.5% for families headed by a single mother. In single-parent families with children 18 and younger the poverty level rises to 40.4%; it rises more dramatically in this demographic, to 52.5%, if the children are younger than 5. The percentage is at least 3% higher in each category if the family is African American.

The Shalom Family Life committee identified poverty as the greatest challenge facing family life in Memphis.

More recent data gathered from the 2003 American Community Survey (ACS) showed in the three years since the 2000 census, percentages increased in each of the aforementioned areas by at least 4%.³ As of 2007 the poverty rate (based again on ACS findings) was 18.8% overall.

A recent article in *Smart City Memphis*, entitled "Statistics Paint a Portrait of a City in Crisis," reported that between 2000 and 2006 the poverty rate in Memphis climbed 27%.⁴ It also stated that large sections of Memphis, including most of North Memphis, South Memphis and Orange Mound have household incomes of less than \$22,500 and some less than \$8,000. Many of the zip codes in these areas have unemployment rates above 30%. Statistics reflect Memphis's infant mortality rate to be higher than some third-world countries, due in large part to poverty. In Memphis, 40% of children under the age of 18 live below the poverty level.

Structure

Poverty notwithstanding, no other single indicator is more correlated to the success or failure of a family than the family structure, specifically, the marital status of the parents.

National studies from researchers such as Paul Amato, Isabell Sawhill, and Sarah McLanahan have produced definitive national surveys studying the effects of family structure on success, particularly as it relates to the children. Their work has concluded that parents have the best ability to provide financially for their families when they are educated, beyond their early twenties in age, and married.

Unfortunately, the number of children born to single parents has been increasing. In 2007, single-parent births accounted for almost 60% of the total births in Shelby County.⁵ These families are significantly more likely to be poor or low-income and vulnerable to disruption. Children in these families begin school at a developmental disadvantage and lag behind their middle-income peers. The increasing number of births to single parents presents a difficult choice for today's society. Decisions have to be made regarding the efforts to educate young men and women on the significance of the two-parent home. The Shalom Family Life Committee believes in the effectiveness of promoting "marriage-first" education to prevent single-parent births as well as in launching mechanisms to support single parents by helping them provide the best possible environments for their families.

From an economic standpoint alone, marital status can greatly impact the resources available to a family. According to census data, single mothers in Memphis typically earn approximately 25% of what a typical married family earns per year. These differences stem mainly from barriers to employment—particularly a lack of education. According to one researcher, no other single event ends the educational attainment of a woman more than childbirth. As a general rule, the level of education achieved at childbirth is as far as the mother will get. Given that more education translates into not only more income but also better preparation for children in the household, young parents are often unable to achieve an educational level that can maximize household earnings and other resources for the family.

Again, according to census data for Shelby County, 45% of children raised by single mothers live in poverty. By comparison, only 6% of children raised by married parents are living in poverty. The effects also appear to limit the future potential to marry. Nationally, unmarried mothers are 40% less likely to ever marry than women who have not had a child. And when these mothers do marry, the situations are difficult at best. The unwed mothers who eventually do marry are more likely to marry men who are high school dropouts or unemployed than women with similar backgrounds and no children.

Education

The family is the basic institution where children learn who they are and what type of future they might expect. Within each ethnic group, values and priorities are also influenced by the family's social status. It is clear that among oppressed minorities in poor urban communities such as Memphis, families face great problems in their efforts to shape their children's futures so that they will experience reasonable success in school and in adult life. Poor urban African-American families differ substantially in the quality of family life they are able to provide, and these differences are reflected in their children's school achievement.

In 2007, single-parent births accounted for almost 60% of the total births in Shelby County.

A family's ability to provide a home environment that prepares children for success in the future develops out of respective family members' past experiences. The phrase "breaking the cycle" is often used when it comes to changing negative outcomes in poor and underserved communities. These "cycles" are the past experiences that have repeated from generation to generation and promise to continue. The values developed from, and relative emphasis of, these past experiences can either be reinforced or altered by current experiences. A long history of survey research shows that low-income African-American families have high educational aspirations for their children. The experiences of African Americans in American society have convinced the majority of parents that their children's chances for occupational success and a comfortable lifestyle will be extremely limited if they remain unable to attain considerably more education than their parents.



Research has also shown that by looking at a family's socialization process and not just its compositional properties, we can gain a better understanding of how "family life" is a part of the hidden curriculum of the home that results in children being successful in school. Some examples of family activities providing a supportive environment for children are reading, writing, topical dialogue, playing word games, and other brain-stimulating hobbies. The excerpts below are from studies that verify the importance of the family unit in the lives of children:

- Across the nation, just under half of children between birth and five years (47.8%) are read to every day by their parents or other family members.
(Russ S, Perez V, Garro N, Klass P, Kuo AA, Gershun M, Halfon N, Zuckerman B. Reading Across the Nation: A Chartbook (2007): Reach Out and Read National Center, Boston, MA.)
- By the age of 2, children who are read to regularly display greater language comprehension, larger vocabularies, and higher cognitive skills than their peers.
(Raikes, H., Pan, B.A., Luze, G.J., Tamis-LeMonda, C.S., Brooks-Gunn, J., Constantine, J., Tarullo, L.B., Raikes, H.A., Rodriguez, E. (2006). "Mother-child book reading in low-income families: Correlates and outcomes during the first three years of life." Child Development, 77(4).)
- The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study found that in the spring of 2000, the children who were read to at least three times a week by a family member were almost twice as likely to score in the top 25% in reading compared to children who were read to less than 3 times a week.
(Denton, Kristen and Gerry West, Children's Reading and Mathematics Achievement in Kindergarten and First Grade (PDF file), U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Washington, DC, 2002.)

A long history of survey research shows that low-income African-American families have high educational aspirations for their children.

Other important characteristics of supportive family environments include communication styles that provide opportunities for direct instruction, feedback, and reinforcement. Also, discipline characterized as "firm but not harsh" is another key component.

Qualities of family life that lead to school success can be found in low-income African American families whether or not the family includes both parents. Much has been written about the possible emergence of a permanent underclass comprised largely of single-parent families dependent upon public assistance, typical of many families in Memphis. If the educational capacities of these families can be strengthened and they are helped to perceive actual opportunities for improving their way of life, the cycle of intergenerational poverty may be broken. It is not class position that determines a family's educational competence but rather the quality of family life within the home that makes a difference.

Recommendations:

The Family Life committee was made aware of the devastating issues many families in our city face everyday. In gathering information, we became overwhelmed by the mental, emotional, and physical suffering so many endure. The vision of The Shalom Project suggests the church is needed to help change the atrocity of unequal access to increased quality of life in our city. In the city of Memphis as it is right now, we seek a God who promises His ways are not the ways of this world. Only such a God of true justice can put people back together and breathe new life into existing systems, destroy old regimes and faulty beliefs, and use The Shalom Project as a new means of restoration. With such a vision in mind, we believe these recommendations become viable:

Develop family-life ministries and family referral networks.

A comprehensive family-life ministry should address family needs, education, workshops, counseling, and other issues directly related to the health of the family structure. Churches in the same area (10 blocks or so) should consider developing family referral networks. One person in each church can be identified to be aware of available resources throughout the city. This person should probably dedicate at least one hour a week to being sure information is kept current.

Seek opportunities to partner with resource churches to address the needs of their respective areas.

Identify what is needed in the community. Through relationship with the resource church, develop strategic ways to address the community’s needs.

Develop a “Church Families Exchange” Ministry

Coordinate a family services communication board. Identify churches, CDC, neighborhood stores, and other institutions and organizations where families can post needs, requests, and concerns for community churches and others to follow up and respond.

parental participation every 2 to 3 weeks. This continues until the child either enters a structured childcare or pre-K program. The program then transitions to afterschool tutoring, clubs, and other social activities for children. Parents continue to meet in a group setting 6 to 10 times per year to continue parenting education and support. Facilitators and counselors in this phase are equipped to deal with crisis-level parenting issues, or they will direct the parents to an existing resource depending on the issue’s severity.

Conclusions:

Effective models to ensure the health of the family unit is rarely made up of only one or two programs and many curriculums have proven to be effective. The observations of this report focus primarily on structure as opposed to curriculum. Programs that have proven the most effective generally are comprised of several smaller programs set up in a sort of linear-support model that begins prior to or at the beginning of the initial family formation.

Two examples are the Harlem Children’s Zone and Operation Smart Child at the Neighborhood Christian Center (Memphis). Both programs are comprehensive, with main differences during the elementary school years.

One is a marriage-enrichment program for newly or about-to-be married couples, instructing in what a healthy marriage looks like and strategies to build and repair marriages. The other program (or goal) is parenting training and strategies. This program includes support for the mother and encouraging healthy prenatal practices, along with screenings and arrangements for medical care during pregnancy. This programs ends with the birth of the child.

The next step is continued parenting classes for the parent(s) that begins to lay the foundation for parents as teachers. Work is done with the parent(s) alone as well as with parent(s) and child. This curriculum progresses to the point where mothers and/or fathers are equipped to provide a stimulating environment for the child(ren) in the home.

The next step is a less-intensive parental program but one of increased intensity with the child. A weekly session is held with a group of children working on specific activities, with

1 The Urban Child Institute (TUCI) Data Book 2008 & 2009
2 United States Census 2000
3 2003 American Community Survey
4 Smart City Memphis article, Statistics Paint Portrait of a City in Crisis 2007
5 Shelby County Health Department

Education



Gaining education is not the singular factor in personal success, but an education is a critical requirement in our culture and a key factor for success in life. According to *The State of Literacy in America*, among adults with the lowest level of literacy, more than 40% live in poverty while only 4% of literate adults live in poverty. Education directly impacts public safety and overall economic growth of a community.

According to the National Children’s Reading Foundation, more than 75% of juvenile crimes are committed by high school dropouts, and the cost to the nation for each high school dropout over his or her lifetime is estimated at \$260,000 according to a study (October 2005) by the Teacher College at Columbia University. The Alliance for Excellent Education reported in 2006 that “if the male high-school graduation rate were increased nationally by 5%, the nation would experience a \$4.9 billion savings in crime-related costs.”

Public education is in crisis all across the nation, with most urban schools struggling to serve an ever-increasing population of children living in poverty and families living in crisis. According to a study from Columbia University’s National Center for Children in Poverty, more than 35% of our nation’s children live in poverty. The 2008 study estimates that more than 28 million children have parents who are unable to meet their families’ basic needs. Obstacles abound nationally and locally to the provision of a quality education for those who need it most.

The Shalom Education Committee examined many factors affecting education in Memphis, especially focusing on the issues and challenges of the school systems which serve the under-resourced children of our community. Our goal was to better understand the current educational climate, both its successes and its challenges, and to identify key areas of need. Relying on professional experience, available data, and personal knowledge of the greater Memphis community, the committee explored the educational environment with a focus on how local churches might be effective in providing resources and assistance to the school district, the neighborhood church, and especially the children, who need loving hearts and hands involved in their lives.

Memphis City Schools operates as a single district with more than 188 schools, comprised of 35 high schools, 36 middle and junior high schools, and 112 elementary. With more than 105,000 students, MCS ranks as one of the largest urban school systems in the United States. There are more than 6,000 teachers and the operating budget is estimated at \$888 million per year. Students receiving free or reduced cost meals total more than 85%, which is an indicator of poverty levels. Shelby County Schools operates in a similar manner and has 48,000 students in a total of 51 schools comprised of 8 high schools, 14 middle schools, and 29 elementary. There are more than 3,000 teachers. An estimated 53% of the students receive free or reduced cost meals in the SCS system.

Educational Challenges:

Like the rest of the nation, Memphis schools certainly have serious challenges. The Shalom Education Committee focused on the factors most relevant to education and attempted to determine the greatest obstacles to quality education in Memphis. The committee discovered multiple challenges, categorized into the following major areas of concern:

Early Childhood Years

Governors across the nation recognize that shifting the odds for children in the first five years is a necessary and critical step towards closing the persistent achievement gap in America.¹ According to Ed Week, the New York Times wrote that, “Driving the [early education] movement is research by a Nobel Prize-winning economist, James J. Heckman, and others showing that each dollar devoted to the nurturing of young children can eliminate the need for far greater government spending on remedial education, teenage pregnancy and prisons.”²

Parents are a child’s first teachers, and the quality of early childhood experiences closely follows the economic and educational status of a child’s parents. Children of well-educated and economically secure parents perform at predictably higher levels. Memphis parents in total fall well below all statistical averages in both education and economic welfare. What occurs in the very first years of a child’s life contributes to that child’s ultimate achievement in school. Educational achievement, in most cases, will determine success in life. Today many children arrive at school with a significant head-start on learning. That makes it much more difficult for children from impoverished backgrounds to catch up. They are behind on the first day of school and fall further behind each day, as the following statistics confirm.

- 79.6% of the children who currently attend Memphis City Schools are classified as Economically Disadvantaged³ (earning less than \$37,000 for a family of four). The Federal Government considers poverty itself to be an impediment to learning.
- Before entering kindergarten, the average cognitive scores of preschool-age children in the highest socioeconomic group are 60% above the average scores of children in the lowest socioeconomic group.⁴
- At 4 years of age, children who live below the poverty line are 18 months behind what is normal for their age group; by age 10 that gap is still present. For children living in the poorest families, the gap is even greater.⁵
- By the time children are 3, trends in amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction are well established and clearly suggested widening gaps to come.⁶
- By the age of 4, an average child in a professional family has accumulated experience with almost 45 million words, an average child in a working-class family has accumulated experience with 26 million words, and an average child in a welfare family has accumulated experience with only 13 million words.⁷
- Poor and low-income children are most likely to be enrolled in early learning programs that are of lower quality overall than those of higher-income families. In fact, a recent study found that early learning classrooms comprised of about 60% of children from low-income homes were rated significantly lower in quality indicators of teaching, teacher-to-child interaction, and provisions for learning than classrooms with fewer low-income children.⁸
- Only 30% of Shelby County’s childcare centers are “Three Star-Rated.” This rating validates that a center meets or exceeds Tennessee’s standards for child-to-adult ratios, curriculum, safety, and teacher qualifications.⁹
- Of the 1,067 childcare centers operating in Shelby County in 2008, only 23 were accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.¹⁰
- The racial makeup of children in the City of Memphis is nearly opposite that of the State of Tennessee. Slightly more than half of all black children in Tennessee live in Shelby County. Six out of every seven black children in Shelby County live in the City of Memphis.¹¹ Black children are disproportionately impacted by the achievement gap.
- 50% of children in Shelby County are born to single mothers,¹² and children born to unwed parents are at a greater risk of suffering economic hardship and a range of obstacles associated with financial insecurity.¹³

What occurs in the very first years of a child’s life contributes to that child’s ultimate achievement in school. Educational achievement, in most cases, will determine success in life.



School Years

Elementary

- Due to these deficits in the early childhood years, economically disadvantaged students are not prepared to enter and excel in elementary school. As an example, The Handbook of Early Literacy Research suggests that the ratio of books per child in middle-income neighborhoods is 13 to 1 and in low-income areas the ratio of books per child is 300 to 1.
- 79.6% of MCS students being economically disadvantaged results in a disproportionately high level of transience. This transience makes it impossible for a child to remain enrolled in the same school or school district and to establish meaningful and secure relationships within a particular community.
- The academic impact of transience and other issues related to economic hardships are seen in the following academic performance of third graders. (Third grade is the first year that the TCAP is administered. The Writing portion is only administered in the fifth grade. Please note, however, that the proficiency rate in Reading does not correlate with the Proficiency rate on the Writing test; Writing scores are significantly lower.)

Percentage Scoring Below Proficient – Elementary

	Reading	Math	Writing
3rd Grade MCS	16.3%	24.9%	NA
3rd Grade State	7.9%	11.3%	NA
4th Grade MCS	15.7%	18.3%	NA
4th Grade State	8.8%	9.6%	NA
5th Grade MCS	7.5%	10.8%	17.6%
5th Grade State	4.7%	6.2%	18.4%

- In 2006 MCS only graduated 35% of its black male students¹⁴. The most recently reported (2008) overall graduation rate from MCS is 66.9%.¹⁵ This is 24.1 percentage points lower than the state goal of 90%.
- African American students received 22,306 of the 23,495 suspensions issued. Of this total, males received 14,675 of the suspensions.¹⁶
- African American students received 200 of the 213 expulsions.¹⁷

- MCS classrooms are increasingly impacted by economic hardship. In a classroom of 30 students in 1969, five children would have been eligible for today’s free or reduced-price lunches. In a classroom of 30 students in 2007, 18 children were eligible.¹⁸
- Multiple studies show that economically disadvantaged students suffer from the word gap, insufficient supplies, family and housing instability, increased dropout rates, and higher risks for teenage pregnancy.

Secondary

- The gains that appeared to be made by the end of the fifth-grade year are not sustained throughout the secondary phase of education.

Percentage Scoring Below Proficient - Secondary

	Reading	Math	Writing
6th Grade	10.2%	14.4%	NA
7th Grade	16.3%	17.0%	NA
8th Grade	11.7%	17.8%	NA
9th Grade	8.5%	33.2%	NA
11th Grade	NA	NA	20.5%

- MCS high-school students are not being adequately prepared to enter and excel in four-year colleges and universities, as evidenced by the following ACT Comparison Chart.

Average ACT Score Comparison Chart

	MCS	State of Tennessee	National Average
Composite	17.5	20.7	21.1
English	17.3	20.8	20.6
Math	17	19.9	21.0
Reading	17.4	21.1	21.4
Science/Reasoning	17.6	20.3	20.8

Dropouts

- As stated earlier, 50% of births in the city of Memphis are to single mothers, many of whom have low income. This increases the chance of the child dropping out by 2.4 times the average middle-income household and 10.5 times that of the average high-income household.
- According to the Memphis Regional Chamber of Commerce, the graduation rate in Memphis is actually 48%.¹⁹
- 85% of the Memphis City School District students are black.²⁰ Black students are disproportionately represented in suspensions, expulsions,²¹ and absenteeism. These trends feed into dropout rates.
- More than half of Memphis City Schools (MCS) high school students and 40% of MCS middle school students reported having tried cigarettes. Tobacco is considered to be a gateway drug that may lead to alcohol, marijuana, and other illegal drug use.²⁸
- High school students in Memphis and Shelby County say they are more sexually active than their counterparts across the state. Also, a higher percentage reports first intercourse before age 13 and having sex with multiple partners. The negative consequences of teen sexual activity can be seen in the high rate of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and early parenting among adolescents in the Memphis area.²⁹

Parental Education and Involvement

We know that not all children have access to the same early environment and experiences. Many children in our community grow up in fractured families made vulnerable by poverty. Parents with low levels of education, especially those who have not completed high school, have higher barriers to steady employment than do better educated parents. They are more likely to be impoverished and to rely on public assistance to supplement their family incomes. Parents’ education levels also correlate closely with childrens’ academic success and overall well-being. Children reared in poverty spend less time reading with their parents and caregivers than do their more affluent peers.²²

- The percentage of children born to teenage mothers under the age of 17 in the City of Memphis is double the national average.²³ A teenage parent is traditionally financially insecure and is more likely to be psychologically and emotionally insecure.²⁴
- 1 of 4 single mothers who gave birth in Shelby County in 2006 did not have a high school diploma.²⁵
- 37% of children born in Shelby County in 2006 will be raised by a parent whose education stopped in high school.²⁶

Behavioral Issues

- Adolescent alcohol and drug use contribute to motor vehicle accidents, unintentional injuries, homicide and suicide, all of which account for 71% of deaths among persons 10 to 24.²⁷

- As stated earlier, African American students received 22,306 of the 23,495 suspensions issued. Of this total, males received 14,675 of the suspensions.³⁰ African American students received 200 of the 213 expulsions.³¹

Conclusions:

From a purely human perspective, the challenges seem overwhelming and insoluble. The sheer number of children in distress in our schools is overwhelming. However, the situation is not hopeless. During the last twenty years, many successful church and parachurch ministries, agencies, and charter schools have demonstrated success can be achieved through focused efforts which have touched the lives of children in our community and established dramatic and measurable improvements. In large measure the faith-based, gospel-centered ministries of hope and healing have been at the forefront of this success. Across all the agencies the results have been similar. A few examples illustrate the commonality of the improvements.

Jubilee Schools initiated a program several years ago which addressed parochial school offerings in the core city with the revitalization of elementary and middle schools. Catholic High School was revitalized in the process. Currently, Catholic High School is graduating 100% of its students who arrived in the parochial school system with achievement rates in the 25 to 45th percentile. Upon graduation these students from seemingly hopeless backgrounds are achieving test scores in excess of 90% and going on to college and success in life.



Charter schools are demonstrating very similar results. There are 23 charter schools in the Memphis area. One successful example is the Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering (MASE), which graduated its first senior class last year. When the charter school legislation passed the state legislature in 2003, the only students allowed to attend were failing students from failing schools. The first class of seventh graders arrived from Vance and Humes Middle Schools and the testing scores of those students were well below 50%. By graduation six years later, their performance had increased and the students were performing at a level greater than 90% proficiency. Another successful example is Circles of Success Learning Academy (COSLA). It is a K-through-5 charter school located on the campus of St. Andrew's AME Church on South Parkway in South Memphis. Since COSLA's inception in 2003 this excellent school has served economically disadvantaged students from the neighborhood. The current enrollment of 170 students is comprised of African-American children, and 90% of those students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches. For 2008-2009, the achievement test scores in the major testing areas were 90% for reading/language arts and 96% for math. Attendance was 97%. COSLA is the only charter school in the state with a SACS accreditation and is a 2009 No Child Left Behind Title I Distinguished School Award Recipient.

Likewise, six resourced suburban churches have adopted urban schools under the MCS Adopt-A-School Program. The administration of the city schools has noted a singular factor in improved test scores at those six schools: the involvement of the church adopter.

Teach for America (TFA) has shown dramatic improvements across the community in classroom after classroom among those students, in some cases, abandoned as impossible by other teachers. In many instances the test scores have followed the sub-50% competency when TFA's work commenced. After a relatively short time period students under TFA's corp member have consistently achieved greater than 90% test results. With a teacher that cares and requires maximum effort, kids can and do learn.

The Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) program was started in 2009 and has graduated 24 masters-level teachers with a distinctively Christian focus to teach in an urban school environment. Funded by the Poplar Foundation, the second-year class has another 24 students.

MTR has received more than 225 applications. MTR has plans to train more than 400 teachers in the next decade. New Leaders for New Schools is another high-level training opportunity for school administrators. Bill and Melinda Gates have expressed confidence in the trajectory of the city schools by making a performance-based grant of \$90 million. Other foundations, including the Poplar Foundation, Hyde Family Foundation, the Assisi Foundation, and Plough Foundation have made significant and ongoing grants to agencies and efforts aimed at an improved educational performance.

The secular and faith-based programs have proven that children in poverty can and do learn when given an environment and opportunity to do so. Research has demonstrated clearly that the single greatest program variable in academic success is a long-term relationship with a caring adult. Currently, there are 20-plus faith-based organizations which daily serve at-risk kids in our community. A rough estimate would suggest these organizations are reaching 40,000 kids each week. Estimates differ, but there are approximately 110,000 children enrolled in Memphis City Schools, and it is estimated there are more than 85% in the free or reduced-cost lunch plan, which is an indication of living at or below the poverty level. A Search Institute study shows that fewer than 30% of middle schoolers participate in structured activities outside of school more than three times per week. Most of the organizations dealing with at-risk kids can document that children involved in the programs on a consistent and regular basis over an extended time period do, in fact, graduate from high school, and that many go on to technical school or college.

The challenge to the church and parachurch ministries in our city is how to partner in order to scale up those successful efforts to reach as many children as soon as possible. Successful, proven results clearly exist. But at current levels these effective efforts are simply not enough. James 1:27 states that religion that pleases God our Father is measured by how the church addresses widows and orphans. While not technically orphans, these children are living lives of deep distress and hopelessness, lives that should cause the hearts of followers of Jesus to be moved sacrificially to find ways to offer hope and healing in loving environments. Surely, it is not too much to think this is possible.

To scale the existing programs up and/or create new ones to serve approximately 70,000 children not being reached is a mammoth undertaking. However, a reasonable strategy is to address those children at the neighborhood church-level in partnership with existing parachurch expertise and other outside resources. To do nothing is to sentence those children to the ongoing cycle of poverty, hopelessness, and high probabilities of future entrenchment in the criminal justice system.

In at-risk children, discouragement begins in third or fourth grade as the child finds academic work significantly challenging and thus has trouble staying focused, keeping up, and learning to read and write. (The State of Connecticut actually estimates its need for prison beds by the literacy rate of its children in the fourth grade.) When these learning difficulties begin for at-risk children, there is typically no parent truly present to help identify the problem and step into the gap on behalf of the child. In middle and upper-middle-income homes, the child with these same difficulties is supported and encouraged through the difficult time and is often provided significant resources to address and remedy the problem. By the time most at-risk children reach middle school they are such poor readers and students overall that dropping out becomes a real alternative. When these troubles begin, many are placed in “resource” classes and become targets of ridicule by classmate. A further cruel irony is that the “cost” of treating children this way burdens the whole society, because a parent with a “resource” child is given additional financial support through federal assistance.

When these at-risk students drop out of school, they have often already been recruited by gangs in elementary school.

Jesus told his disciples, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14). Further, as He instructed his disciples to pray in what has come to be known as the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10), what does this mean for Jesus’ followers today? Surely we need to have a high priority to intervene and help stop the downward cycle for children sooner rather than later. Are we being the hands and feet of Jesus to these children?

When these at-risk students drop out of school, they have often already been recruited by gangs in elementary school. In gangs they find a structured environment of discipline and accountability. Gang life requires loyalty of its members and provides a child with a ready-made framework to be somebody, even if that “somebody” is a person they never truly hoped to be. Are the disciples and followers of Jesus offering a positive alternative to these children? Are we intervening early to help them to overcome the educational challenges in elementary and middle school?

In a study of the Shelby County Jail located at 201 Poplar, estimated the inmate population, which is predominantly African-American males, has an overall high school graduation rate of less than 10%. More than 90% of the inmates on any given day do not have a high school education and of those inmates more than 70% have some level of learning disability. The disturbing question we may try to avoid asking ourselves is exactly when that downward cycle first began, one leading to high-school dropouts moving toward lives of crime trapped in the criminal justice system rather than being met where they are, early on, and developed as productive members of the community?

Boys & Girls Clubs of America statistically tracks the participants in their clubs’ programs and have documented results that show more than 95% of their participants, if involved for five years, receive a high-school diploma. Similar results from other at-risk kids’ agencies show similar high school graduation rates prevail. When asked how many participants of the various programs become involved in the criminal justice system, the answer is commonly the very same: “Very few.” Therefore, it seems reasonable and responsible to assume that if the high-school graduation rate is increased the crime rate will show a significant decrease.

In order to divert at-risk kids from the streets and keep them in the classroom, the interdiction needs to begin no later than elementary school. High quality, early childhood education and home visitation programs are proven and powerful preventative measures that can promote resiliency to future risk factors and decrease the need for future intervention. The common factor in improving the possibility that a child in poverty can gain an education is a structural environment that helps the child believe he or she can be successful and then provides support and encouragement along the many steps to catch



up. Tutoring programs which give a child a one-on-one opportunity to work on basic skills with an interested and committed tutor have been proven essential in changing the trajectory of a child's learning experience. Many faith-based organizations are very good at reaching kids and encouraging them to become more proficient, disciplined, and desirous to learn. Parachurch organizations also do an excellent job at preparing students for college entrance examinations. Mentoring programs are also proven to assist youth in graduating high school and entering post-secondary programs that prepare them for career success. Arguably, if every child had a mentor, the problem would be addressed and solved.

Kids in poverty arrive at school well behind their peers in middle and upper-middle-income environments. In low-income urban schools fourth graders read at a level 70% below grade level, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Approximately half of the ninth graders in a typical high-poverty, urban school in America read at a sixth or seventh grade level.

The neighborhood church in partnership with the excellence and expertise already existing in faith-based organizations, if combined with caring people from resourced churches, could become vital partners in the solution of a neighborhood site-based location where kids could safely come to "catch up." Parents would be also be drawn to that environment as the neighborhood church seeks to serve those in their immediate vicinity.

Recommendations:

- A detailed analysis of the church, parachurch ministries, charter schools, agencies, and any others serving at-risk kids is needed to determine an estimate of the current population being served to then determine an estimate of those remaining to be served. A 10-year strategy could then be developed to scale up the ministries and agencies to at-risk kids through a partnership comprised of the neighborhood church, parachurch ministries, resourced churches, and other agencies.
- An army of tutors and mentors is necessary to serve through neighborhood churches, parachurch ministries, Adopt-A-School programs, charter schools, and other organizations with the ultimate goal of every child in Memphis having such a tutor.

- The Adopt-A-School program could be enhanced by developing a methodology to scale up the program that would include additional resource churches and large faith-based organizations (such as a hospital system).
- Out-of-school programs might be piloted to operate in concert with Adopt-A-School, which could include mentoring and tutoring for youth at the neighborhood church.
- Churches could promote the development of the One-By-One mentoring program for expecting mothers to help them understand the importance of positive prenatal behaviors on early brain development to enhance children's opportunity for full educational opportunity.
- The growth and training of urban school teachers' needs focused support through programs like Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) and Teach For America (TFA) by educating college-age and young adults at resourced and neighborhood churches about the opportunity to serve.

- 1 <http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/NGASummit.pdf?docID=4381>
- 2 blogs.edweek.org/teachers/new_terrain/2008/12/we_are_closing_the_achievement.html
- 3 <http://edu.reportcard.state.tn.us/pls/apex/f?p=200:1:4441812749685142>
- 4 Lee, V. E. & Burkam, D. T. (2002). Inequality at the starting gate: Social background differences in achievement as children begin school. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.
- 5 Layzer, J. (in press). Project Upgrade in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates.
- 6 http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/spring2003/catastrophe.html
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_695.html
- 9 <http://tennessee.gov/humanserv/adfam/card-family&group.pdf>
- 10 The National Association for the Education of Young Children has established rigorous standards for childcare centers and employees nationwide.
- 11 TUCI. Demographics, p 5.
- 12 TUCI. Demographics, p 6.
- 13 <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/indicators/13teenbirth.cfm>
- 14 <http://blackboysreport.org/node/58>
- 15 <http://edu.reportcard.state.tn.us/pls/apex/f?p=200:50:612004331305000>
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 TUCI, Education, p 15.
- 19 http://teachforamerica.org/corps/placement_regions/memphis/schools.htm
- 20 <http://edu.reportcard.state.tn.us/pls/apex/f?p=200:1:2174789093735755>
- 21 <http://edu.reportcard.state.tn.us/pls/apex/f?p=200:60:2174789093735755>
- 22 TUCI, Family Home Environment, p 1.
- 23 TUCI, Demographics, p 8.
- 24 www.childtrendsdatabank.org/indicators/13teenbirth.cfm
- 25 TUCI, Demographics, p 9.
- 26 TUCI, Family Home Environment, p 16.
- 27 TUCI, Health Domain, p 7.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 TUCI, Health Domain, p 16.
- 30 <http://edu.reportcard.state.tn.us/pls/apex/f?p=200:50:612004331305000>
- 31 Ibid.





Health care has become an issue of increasing political debate and national concern over the past few years. At the time of this report, health care reform is rapidly becoming a reality. Though there will continue to be arguments for and against the decisions reached by our nation's leaders, the points of agreement lie in the fact that our nation is faced with a serious need for better health care for all our citizens.

Infants die in the U.S. at a rate of approximately 6 per 1,000 births, which ranks in the top five of developed countries. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is calculated as the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Many argue that this is due to inadequate or lack of proper prenatal care. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has stated that at least a third of all infant mortality in the United States is attributed to complications of prematurity;¹ other studies assert that the figure is closer to half. With this information, it may be fair to state that infant mortality in the U.S. is principally a problem of premature birth, which is a complication of just over one in every 10 pregnancies.

Our expanding girth is America's most visible health problem. Not only are most adults too heavy, but obesity rates for children have more than doubled in the past 30 years. Americans today are heavier and less active than at any point in history. Two thirds of adults are either overweight or obese, and fewer than one third exercise at least three times a week. Excess weight is a significant factor in four of the six leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes. Obesity has also fueled a 45% rise in diabetes over the past 20 years. A person born in 2000 has a 1 in 3 chance of developing the disease. According to the most recent data from the American Diabetes Association, 23.6 million people have diabetes mainly due to lifestyle, and an additional 57 million are pre-diabetic. At the same time, by 2010 nearly 46 million Americans, including 8 million children, lacked health insurance.

Two thirds of adults are either overweight or obese, and fewer than one third exercise at least three times a week.

The news is not completely discouraging, though. In recent years, dramatic successes have been achieved in the fight against some of the most deadly illnesses. The death rate for heart disease, the number-one killer, has declined by 26% since 1999. The occurrence and death rate for cancer, the second most common killer, are in decline for the first time.

The challenges for the City of Memphis are not very different from the challenges of the nation. Infants are dying at the staggering rate of approximately 14 per 1,000 live births. The most common cause of death among all Shelby County residents is heart disease, which accounts for almost 30% of all deaths each year. Following heart disease, cancer is the second most-common cause of death among Shelby County residents at approximately 20% of all annual deaths.² The third cause is cerebrovascular disease, which includes strokes, followed by accidents, chronic lower respiratory disease (bronchitis, asthma, and emphysema), and diabetes mellitus. The next set of common causes of death among the general population fluctuate from year to year to include influenza and pneumonia, Alzheimer's, assault (homicide), HIV, septicemia, and essential hypertension.

Health Assets:

Memphis health resources include the hospital systems and numerous community partners and other organizations. These include local partners such as congregations under the Congregational Health Network (CHN) umbrella, Christ Community Health Services (CCHS), Church Health Center (CHC), Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association (MIFA), community agencies and state agencies, and coalitions like Healthy Memphis Common Table. The coalition also has national and international partners who will provide tools, materials, trusted relationships, infrastructure, volunteers, technical support, research design, possible grant funding, and more. Integrating and

building a seamless care delivery pathway that starts in and extends back out of the hospitals and community health clinics is key to an increase in the well being of the entire city.

Health Challenges:

The Shalom Health Committee studied reports of these facts and identified the following as the leading challenges to address, which are focused on improving access to healthcare and improving health outcomes for Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare’s Center of Excellence in Faith and Health, as originally formulated by Senior VP, Rev. Dr. Gary Gunderson:³

- Infant and Maternal Health
- Mental Health and Domestic Violence
- Chronic Care Conditions
- Frail Elderly and End-of-Life Care

Infant and Maternal Health

Shelby County and Zimbabwe have roughly the same incidence of infant mortality: 14 per 1,000 live births! Infant mortality is defined as death within the first year of life. From 2002 to 2005 the number of infant deaths decreased by approximately 17% in Shelby County. Nevertheless, the rate is alarming within the context of cities of comparable size and the number of families in our community who are forced to deal with such a traumatic experience. A clear disparity exists between African-American and white mothers in the rate of infant deaths. African-American mothers are three times more likely to have an infant die within the first year of life than their white counterparts in Shelby County. Factors contributing to infant death include prematurity, low birth weight, congenital abnormalities and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Domestic violence is the source of 60% of all crime and 30% of murders.

Mental Health and Domestic Violence

Memphis has egregious problems with violence and mental health issues that do not stem simply from lack of care for the chronically mentally ill but from the unremitting stress of poverty, economic disparity, and lack of safety. For example, an African-American male between the ages of 18 to 54 is 13 times more likely to die of homicide or suicide

than his European-American counterpart. Roughly 60% of the recidivistic patients seen in the Med and the Methodist-LeBonheur Health System (MLH) emergency rooms have a co-occurring mental health or stress issue (such as low-grade stress and depression) along with another chronic condition (such as diabetes). Domestic violence is the source of 60% of all crime and 30% of murders.

Chronic Care Conditions

Memphis is the limb-amputee capital of the southeastern U.S., due to high incidences of untreated diabetes and subsequent limb amputations, primarily in African Americans. Memphis is also considered the “stroke belt” of the U.S., and cardiovascular rates for African Americans are double those of European Americans in Shelby County. Obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and strokes are pandemics in Shelby County, all closely tied to poverty level and ethnicity.⁴

Frail Elderly and End-of-Life Care

The New England Journal of Medicine study (1 April 2009) on costs of recidivism in Medicare patients (those rehospitalized within 30 days of discharge) reported that in 2004,⁵ \$17 billion dollars were lost due to this problem, not to mention the suffering and poor quality of life for patients who must return to the hospital prematurely. In the case of Memphis and Shelby County, approximately 10% of residents are over the age of 65, and many live alone or in isolation yet may be in need of supervision. Some receive inadequate medical attention and along with their families are placed in the challenging position of deciding how to allocate available resources for basic living needs or medication and medical-related expenses. A significant number of these citizens have to forego the option of living in their homes to become residents of assisted living facilities and other hospices.

According to statistics by the Center for Disease Control (2006), Tennessee had the second highest state death rate from Alzheimer’s disease. Older people with Alzheimer’s usually have other health problems such as heart disease or diabetes. Alzheimer’s disease makes the treatment of other health problems more difficult and drives up the cost of care for many Mid-South families.

Proposed Actions:

The Memphis Model

The Health Committee will focus on these four challenge areas and ways to improve them in the future, using the Memphis Model, as originally conceived by Dr. Teresa Cutts, Program Director of Research and Practice in the Center of Excellence in Faith and Health.

The core of this strategy rests on use of the “love economy” of nonpaid volunteers to expand access, services, teaching, and healthcare resources further out into the community and congregations. Innovative ways of funding, or “seeding,” volunteer staff in the community must be taken into thoughtful consideration. That is, if there is need for gas money, continuing education, paying of licensure fees for retired nurses and physicians and ancillary staff, these needs must be met to allow such loving volunteers to be able to continue to work for love rather than money. Also, each of these volunteers could then ideally serve at a chosen local community health clinic, where he or she is known, respected, and trusted

The Memphis Model aims to use the best learning from the Chronic and Collaborative Care Model of the IHI and Wagner’s group, as well as public health initiatives like Healthy People, Healthy Communities and expand it further to build a delivery-care system that strongly emphasizes and activates involvement of the faith communities, community coalitions, and not-for-profit social service entities. This system will be integrated seamlessly with excellent primary care centers to be in six to eight neighborhoods of Memphis. The difference in the Memphis Model and the Chronic and Collaborative Care Model is the more intentional focus on building out the community resources (for patients and community), creating a delivery system design that starts in the community and links inside the hospitals and primary-care centers, built upon the scaffolding of the Christ Community Health Services, Church Health Center, MIFA, and MLH’s congregational partnerships (Congregational Health Network, CHN). Additionally, a tight link will be built between healthcare-organization leadership and that of community leaders, along with champion providers to expand the Clinical Information system support further into the community.

Leveraging and aligning fragmented community assets will expedite quality of life and broadly define community

health outcomes in Memphis. Addressing the social or root determinants of health (such as poverty, educational level, and safety) are all critical elements of The Shalom Project. All of Memphis will pay now or pay later for poor health status, and taking a proactive stance in preventing high-end tertiary care needs of indigent populations and redirecting care to more appropriate sites will be a win-win proposition for all.

The neighborhood church should use community and congregational intelligence rather than knowledge that is hospital-driven. Patient-centered care models start at home, not in the hospital. However, the ideology of community engagement in this model must shift from the concept of seeing involvement as an act of charity to that of improving overall community health. This is not those who “have” doing good deeds for those who “have not.” It is all of Memphis partnering together to improve the health of all Memphians.

The neighborhood church should use community and congregational intelligence rather than knowledge that is hospital driven.

Integration of all systems of care delivery is vital in this model, with a major focus on shifting care further into the community and away from emergency departments at the Med and MLH University and other hospitals, which are used currently by many Memphians as their medical homes and for any and all health problems (up to 60% non-emergency). The Memphis Model will measure at individual patient levels the undergirding structure of congregational partnerships embodied by the Congregational Health Network (CHN), a growing partnership between MLH and more than one hundred congregations. Also, Christ Community Health Services (CCHS, circa 1996), the Church Health Center (CHC, circa 1987) and Metropolitan Interfaith Association (MIFA, circa 1968), three durable and not-for-profit faith-based organizations that provide primary care, preventive services, outreach to faith communities and social services, will undergird the work of integrating systems of care delivery in Shelby County. These structures of care delivery as described will be predicated on trusted relationships with CHN navigators and congregational liaisons, many of whom likely wear multiple hats. (For instance, one of



these people may be a nurse at the Med as well as a health liaison at a large African-American Baptist church as well as a volunteer for a ministry that supports victims whose families have experienced violent deaths). Improving self-management of care for individuals outside of hospitals and ambulatory care offices is vital and can be accomplished with greater effectiveness and efficiency via trusted liaisons in congregations. Building capacity for activated self-management of disease processes, such as care-giving, teaching, screening, and other healthcare efforts in the community, often offered by volunteer staff, is also key to sustaining this model.

Decreasing institutionalized services and building intentional and seamless pathways for care will be of great importance, but the effectiveness of how care flows through these pathways is contingent upon relationships and trust. Community engagement will be ongoing, in terms of each neighborhood and congregation offering their wants, needs, intelligence, and assets to the conversation about building this community-wide care delivery model. Transparency and sharing of data will come from use of the Religious Health Assets mapping strategy, which engages community leaders and gleans both what assets are available, as well as identifying exemplary service providers and programs and leveraging networks and relationships. The hospital care delivery system will be tightly linked with excellent primary care community health clinics, but the focus of this proposal will be on linking those traditional healthcare delivery systems tightly into the congregations and community at large, via CHN and other faith-based organizations' efforts. We believe that this approach will also leverage and activate the viability and resources of community coalitions, many of whom struggle to have good communication with traditional healthcare organizations.

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- 1 Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2006)
 - 2 Shelby County Health Department
 - 3 Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare's Center of Excellence in Faith and Health – Dr. Gary Gunderson
 - 4 Healthy Memphis Common Table
 - 5 The New England Journal of Medicine, April 2009

Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization



At the foundation of any healthy city, healthy families must abound. People living in relative peace on safe streets in affordable housing make healthy neighborhoods, communities, and a healthy city. The Shalom Project also believes the core of any healthy neighborhood must be a healthy neighborhood church that reaches the hearts and serves the needs of residents from a holistic approach.

Good and affordable housing does not assure a good home. A home is a house where there are caring people loving each other. Good housing, however, does afford an enhanced opportunity to create good homes.

Unfortunately, a high inventory of poor housing in the core city sustains many intractable problems and intensely challenges the development of a comprehensive solution. For example, Shelby County Government has more than 15,000 parcels currently tax-delinquent and another 1,500 parcels government-owned from tax foreclosures. The numbers are staggering. These denigrating circumstances have developed over a long period of decline. Many neighborhoods are facing devastating factors such as a 15 to 30% loss of population, abandoned properties, absentee landlords, predatory lending practices, blighted multifamily complexes, lack of code enforcement, and neglected and crumbling public infrastructure.

Despite these problems, committed and zealous people are working daily to restore signs of hope and encouragement in pockets across the urban landscape. As an example, a South Memphis Revitalization Plan (SoMe RAP) is well underway to address an area containing 140 city blocks, 1,800 lots, 21 churches, 5 schools, and a city park—all home to more than 6,800 residents. At the center of this initiative is a collaborative comprised of hundreds of area residents, St. Andrews AME Church, The Works CDC, Self Tucker Architects, the Consilience Group, The University of Memphis, the Hyde Family Foundations, and the City of Memphis. Based on a grassroots, resident-driven agenda, the SoMe Rap has adopted an asset-based community redevelopment model. SoMe Rap has developed its improvement goals and has short-term initiatives as well as long-term goals to create momentum for transforming the neighborhood. This is but one example of several public-private initiatives now underway across the landscape of Memphis.

Relying on professional experience, available data, and personal knowledge of the greater Memphis community, the Shalom Committee on Housing has attempted to examine the myriad of factors that impact housing in Memphis. In so doing, the committee also attempted to identify the influences that distinguish neighborhoods in Memphis from each other and define certain factors that influence the relative attractiveness of these different neighborhoods.

As expected, Memphis is made up of neighborhoods that range in perception as attractive places to live to the very unattractive. Good-quality housing versus poor-quality housing tends to be a key characteristic in these perceptions. With this as a starting point, the committee focused on the factors, problems, and issues related to poor-quality housing in less-attractive areas, with a goal of identifying potential actions to address problems.

These guiding observations include the following:

- The relative health and stability of a community is reflected in the condition and quality of its housing.
- The condition and quality of housing in any neighborhood is directly correlated to the resources of its residents.
- Attractive neighborhoods will attract residents with greater resources.
- Those with fewer resources will be forced into less attractive neighborhoods, or the neighborhoods with fewer resources will decline.

These observations gave rise to some common assumptions generally applicable to the life cycle of a neighborhood and its housing. Healthy neighborhoods exhibit certain common characteristics of public safety, healthy neighborhood churches, good schools, key services, and good location and proximity to jobs—all of which make these areas attractive to residents. As a product of the

relative attractiveness of a neighborhood, the percentage of home ownership increases, and as the percentage of home ownership increases, investment is made and the relative quality of housing stock generally improves. As housing quality improves, the stability and sustainability of the neighborhood increases, making the neighborhood more attractive and causing home values to increase. This progressive cycle can perpetuate the health of the neighborhood.

Conversely, a regressive cycle develops as housing becomes less affordable, and as community attractiveness declines, conditions change over time. This regressive cycle is often evidenced in under-resourced and declining neighborhoods and has the greatest impact on the poor, who are less able to afford quality housing in attractive neighborhoods. With the goal of improving housing opportunities for these residents caught in this regressive cycle, the committee focused on the causes and influences common to these areas.

Public housing policy of recent years has also created challenges in the various neighborhoods either already in crisis or on the verge of accelerated decline. When the various HOPE VI projects were awarded, the demolition of several high- population density, public-housing projects near the downtown area dispersed a large number of residents into at-risk neighborhoods and has caused significant pressure on the stability of those affected residential neighborhoods. Correlations have been quantified and reported of increased incidences of violent crime, blight, economic housing flight, and other negative impacts. Police, especially, and other public agencies serving the community were not well prepared for issues related to the influx of so many public housing residents into a neighborhood.

Through discussion, the committee concluded that affordable, quality housing is directly related to a neighborhood's basic human needs of safety, quality of education, and access to basic services are of primary importance to any healthy community. Basic services would include a neighborhood church which welcomes its neighbors, seeks to serve nearby residents at the point of need, and could serve as a conduit to opportunity for the neighborhood residents. Secondary factors include location, accessibility, proximity to employment opportunities,

and history. Without relative safety, good churches, good schools, and basic services, no community can function, much less be healthy. Neighborhoods exhibiting higher crime rates, poor performing schools, and substandard or neglected basic services are most affected by poor-quality housing.

These basic requirements are essential for healthy neighborhoods and are study topics for other Shalom Project committees. Thus it is important to note how dependent good housing is on those committees' respective areas of concern.

Housing Challenges

With an understanding of these guiding observations, the committee focused its discussions on the factors most relevant to housing and refined its efforts to determine the biggest obstacles to attractive housing opportunities in under-resourced areas. The committee discovered that multiple obstacles exist, but most of them can be categorized into three main areas of concern:

Personal Capacity

Personal capacity issues primarily consist of challenges to an individual's ability to pay for and maintain quality housing. In many under-resourced neighborhoods the population is negatively affected by high unemployment, low household incomes, poor financial literacy, lack of knowledge about homeownership, lack of credit, and poor credit histories. This combination of factors plus low resources leads to higher concentrations of older housing stock, multifamily housing structures, and visibly deficient property maintenance. These concentrations prevent the area from attracting outside financial capital, which over time is devastating to the viability and attractiveness of a neighborhood. Further, as should be expected, these neighborhoods attracted more of those residents with the fewest resources. As a result, these same neighborhoods have high concentrations of poverty-stricken and elderly residents on fixed incomes, as well as rising immigrant populations. Many in these groups fall victim to unconventional and predatory lenders, exacerbating the personal capacity of the neighborhood. Also, the breakdown of family structures, poor education, lack of jobs, and other results of the destructive cycle of poverty are significant contributors to the lack of personal capacity.

 See Map C: Completed Foreclosures (p. 71 in the appendix)



Housing Supply

Housing supply issues primarily consist of market related factors that impact the type and mix of housing stock in a particular neighborhood. These factors include the proportional mix of rental housing and owner-occupied housing. Higher levels of rental units in a neighborhood can create instability that leads to declines in housing values, quality, and supply. Higher levels of multi-family versus single-family residences are perpetuated by the lack of resources and can also have negative implications. Once again, the same lack of resources (personal capacity) in a declining neighborhood make it difficult to effectively replace or update obsolete housing stock, compounding the negative cycle. Over time, home sale listings increase, foreclosures increase, and few, if any, new housing starts occur. These challenges to the housing supply make it difficult for a declining neighborhood to attract sufficient outside capital to remain attractive or viable, and they consume the home equity of long-term residents.

Housing Quality

Housing quality issues primarily consist of the physical condition and structural considerations of the housing supply in under resourced areas. Housing-quality issues are closely related to personal capacity and housing supply issues in that poor housing quality tends to be a symptom of these other challenges (i.e., lack of personal capacity often goes hand-in-hand with a general state of disrepair). The age of housing stock and the initial construction quality have the greatest influence in areas of poor housing quality. Older neighborhoods originally developed as lower-cost housing alternatives have seen accelerated declines in attractiveness and value. Poor initial construction quality does not hold up well over time, so that areas with concentrations of these types of dwellings have a rapid rate of decay. Other factors also have tremendous impact on those residing in areas of poor housing quality. Energy efficiency is a major problem for low-income residents, who have great difficulty in managing variable or proportionately higher costs for heating and cooling their homes. Ongoing maintenance requirements also pose a tremendous challenge in low-income areas, where residents are often unable to pay upkeep costs. The issue of code enforcement is widely associated with a theory of crime prevention called “broken windows.” Where there is no tolerance for broken windows and other property blight, crime goes down; conversely, where broken windows and other property code violations are allowed to exist, crime tends to rise. Some of the problems

are associated with a lack of resources on the part of homeowners to address problem properties. However, there is also a problem created by absentee owners and landlords who often create and sustain as common business practice an environment wherein properties are not well maintained. Only recently has the state legislature passed enabling legislation, which allows the environmental court to aggressively pursue code violations and force remedial or corrective action upon the negligent property owners to correct code violations or face losing ownership of the property through condemnation. This newly granted authority forces landlords to show a plan and resources to correct the code violations on a timely basis. Just recently, for example, an abandoned multifamily property just north of Poplar was demolished under court order because the landlord could not demonstrate a plan to reintroduce the apartments into the rental market; therefore the landlord agreed to demolish the property. Widely implemented, this approach could be an effective means to address blight and abandoned properties.

Without relative safety, good churches, good schools, and basic services, no community can function, much less be healthy.

Housing Assets

The Shalom Housing Committee made an initial effort to inventory the numerous agencies, organizations, and ministries engaged in the community to address the housing needs of under-resourced neighborhoods and their residents. The great challenges facing these areas have long been recognized, so there are many well-developed and long-functioning organizations involved in finding solutions. Because of the financial, legal, and regulatory hurdles that exist in the housing sector, many of these organizations are funded or run by governmental entities. Numerous other organizations are also engaged in housing initiatives, many secular and many faith-based.

After reviewing these many organizations, the committee readily determined that one of the greatest resources in specifically addressing and improving housing opportunities in Memphis is the large network of Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and Neighborhood-Based Organizations (NBOs) already in existence. Generally, these CDCs and NBOs are geographically oriented toward defined areas and neighborhoods, many of which have significant quality-of-life problems and housing needs. The committee discussed several strategies to address neighborhood and housing-quality issues; in the process, the committee quickly realized that nearly all these strategies were already being implemented by existing CDCs, in varying stages of commitment or success.

Therefore the committee examined the activity of a sampling of these organizations to try to gain insight into what programs and initiatives appeared to be making the greatest impact in their respective neighborhoods. Through this process, the committee learned of the wide spectrum of activity in which they are engaged. Most established CDCs have performed assessments of the needs, problems, assets, and goals for their specific geographic areas. Most are aware of and are utilizing federal, state, and city housing and financial resources to advance their agendas. Most have built awareness of their organizations within their communities, and some beyond.

Thus the efforts of community organizations seem very generally to fall into these two aforementioned categories:

Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

These organizations are oriented toward real estate improvement and affordable-housing development. Each has varying capabilities and strategies, but most are active in addressing the real estate needs of their communities, and many also include programs and initiatives aimed at economic and workforce development as well as neighborhood safety and security.

Neighborhood Based Organizations (NBOs)

These organizations are separate from but often work in conjunction with an economically focused CDC component; most are expanding their focus to eliminate the systemic causes of poverty in areas of concentrated disadvantage. Beyond housing, economic, and safety issues, these NBOs are implementing additional programs to improve

the quality of life of their neighbors, build community cohesiveness, and improve access to all resources required for a healthy community. These NBOs are fewer in number than CDCs; yet many NBOs already have ties to churches and other faith-based organizations so that, together, they might take a more wholistic approach to addressing the physical and spiritual needs of their communities.

The committee feels that the quality of life in poor areas of Memphis with substandard housing opportunities could be dramatically and permanently improved through the activity and advocacy that vital, well-organized CDC-NBO teams could provide. The committee believes that an effective NBO would be of unquantifiable benefit to each under-resourced neighborhood in the city and that existing CDCs provide a great framework in these neighborhoods to achieve that goal. Any assistance that area churches can provide to an existing CDC in expanding their efforts to become a comprehensive CDC-NBO team would therefore be of great potential benefit.

Opportunities for the Church

The committee believes that the existing CDC organizations potentially offer the most effective mechanism for addressing housing and quality-of-life issues facing under resourced communities in Memphis. As stated, these CDCs have or are building good track records, are doing meaningful work, and have built credibility within their neighborhoods. They already have an excellent understanding of the specific needs of their communities and their residents and have networks of communication and resources already in place. They also are familiar with the resources available for affordable-housing development, are actively engaged in housing initiatives, and many have fairly well developed long range plans for their neighborhoods. Not to the exclusion of any future initiatives by churches in Memphis, the committee strongly believes it would be difficult, time consuming, and counterproductive to attempt to duplicate the existing structure or activities of existing CDCs.

Therefore the committee believes tremendous opportunity exists for area churches to partner with individual CDCs to become involved in existing efforts. The greatest potential impact that area churches can have seems to be to employ their human, financial, and spiritual resources to complement and expand the activities of the CDC for the benefit of its neighborhood and its residents. Over

time, these types of partnerships can help CDCs evolve into NBOs able to effectively overcome the systemic causes of poverty and poor quality of life that challenge so many areas of Memphis.

It seems to be a natural fit for willing churches to partner with existing CDCs—either in their own neighborhoods or in communities exhibiting particular needs—to more effectively employ their time, treasures, and talents to complement the CDCs efforts.

Proposed Strategy

Some of the most effective and successful community revitalization efforts in recent years have been closely tied to efforts of Christian churches and ministries, and these examples can serve as a model for future efforts in Memphis. Church/community partnerships that seem to have the most significant success over time have had the goal from the outset of both addressing the housing needs of the community and also becoming true NBOs that meet the many needs of the neighborhood and its residents.

Common themes of these efforts include:

- Churches partnering with CDCs to provide labor and resources.
- Churches encouraging people of faith to physically move into the neighborhood and exhibit the work and spirit of Christ.
- Churches assisting the community to organize to meet its own quality-of-life needs and then to take pride in those accomplishments.

With this in mind, the committee affirms that church partnerships with existing CDCs is the most effective strategy in the hopes that such partnerships can develop over time to be focused on the total needs of the community—not simply housing.

Such relationships must be pursued deliberately and realistically and should be viewed from the outset as true partnerships, with the church coming alongside to complement the activity of a committed organization. Many CDCs have been in existence for several years and originated organically to address some of the most urgent human needs of particular neighborhoods. New church partners must be aware of and sensitive to the specific histories, personalities, and other organizational characteristics of these existing CDCs. Other church

partners or ministries may already be working with a particular CDC, which new church partners must also consider. Well developed long range plans may already be in place. A church must understand numerous considerations before becoming an effective partner.

Since quality housing is a basic, tangible need in every community, most CDCs will have material, time, and resources devoted to improving housing quality and increasing housing affordability. The Shalom Housing Committee would expect any church partnerships with CDCs to continue to have a housing component, but over time, they could develop other programs and initiatives that address other basic quality-of-life needs detailed by other Shalom committees. Poverty and other systemic problems are generally reflected in the quality of an area's housing inventory, so solutions will be multifaceted and interrelated with other community needs. Churches can help address these other obvious needs to help insure the success of affordable, quality housing to lift the vitality and sustainability of the neighborhood.

Some of the most effective and successful community revitalization efforts in recent years have been closely tied to efforts of Christian churches and ministries.

Housing-related activity that could be managed through a CDC, utilizing the resources of a church partner, might include:

Supporting and participating in existing programs, such as:

- Providing volunteer labor and assistance with new construction.
- Providing volunteer assistance in efforts to reduce blight.
- Assisting in efforts to improve community assets (parks, public areas, etc.).
- Participating in work crews providing basic housing repair services.
- Providing professional expertise for housing or development-related issues.
- Providing volunteer assistance with CDCs administrative duties and functions.



Providing or helping to develop financial support, such as:

- Planning and raising funds for project related expenses.
- Assisting with research, initiation, and completion of grant requests.
- Investigating congregational connections to needed supplies or capital. Providing resources to purchase and rehabilitate properties.
- Creating new opportunities for vested homeownership or safe rental housing.
- Using connections to streamline property acquisition and redevelopment.

Providing advocacy, such as:

- Working to report and strengthen code-violation enforcement.
- Advocating for landlord responsibility laws and enforcement.
- Capitalizing on energy efficiency initiatives.

Ideas for more comprehensive service activities that could be managed through a CDC, utilizing the resources of a church partner, are numerous and unlimited, but might include:

Improving economic opportunities, such as:

- Aiding in job training, job creation, and economic development.
- Building awareness of the need for jobs in the outside business community.
- Seeking to connect employers with resident employees.

Improving the personal capacity of the residents, such as:

- Creating financial literacy classes and programs.
- Identifying financial and responsible-credit opportunities.
- Advocating for stronger predatory-lending laws.

Improving the quality of life and neighborhood pride, such as:

- Envisioning creative crime prevention initiatives .
- Advocating for equal access to city services and infrastructure.
- Establishing and maintaining neighborhood communication networks.
- Publishing and delivering neighborhood newsletters.
- Creating effective methods for identifying and addressing problem properties.

Helping to meet the physical needs of the residents, such as:

- Exploring the availability of low cost health care and providing advocacy.
- Supporting area educational institutions through tutoring programs and after-school care.

More than anything, an engaged and active CDC/church partnership could be of help in simply connecting the resources of the greater community with the specific needs of an individual neighborhood. In this process, the opportunities to demonstrate the spirit and love of Christ abound.

Proposed Actions:

Since housing is particularly influenced by real estate and its underlying value, it is capital intensive in nature. This being the case, many solutions to the aforementioned issues ultimately require the investment of capital to upgrade or re-develop housing stock and associated infrastructure. Knowing that availability of capital is a limiting factor and a constant challenge to improved housing opportunities, the committee instead focused on identifying actions that do not necessarily require large amounts of capital.

This consideration therefore caused us to ask how the church can help address these issues:

- By ministering directly to the people thus affected
- By acting as advocates for change by influencing policy or other decisions.

The following actions are vitally important, but all are superseded in importance by the empowering approach of working with and serving under the neighborhood residents. Larger issues must be addressed through economic development initiatives, jobs training, strengthening neighborhood associations, and creating advocacy initiatives.

Actions to Address Issues of Personal Capacity:

- Support existing public and private job training programs.
- Cultivate employers and employment opportunities.
- Formalize and participate in programs to improve financial literacy.
- Organize advocacy efforts to promote credit opportunities and stronger predatory lending laws.
- Facilitate community relationships and resident neighborhood associations.



- Initiate an effort to aggregate information on available financial capacity and financial assistance resources to distribute to church partners.

Actions to Address Issues of Housing Supply:

- Understand and evaluate the existing efforts of CDCs and NBOs in the various neighborhoods.
- Identify and map those neighborhoods in greatest decline and those at increased risk along with identification of aligned neighborhood churches, CDCs, and/or NBOs.
- Pursue pilot partnerships with neighborhood churches and resource churches with existing CDCs and/or NBOs to develop common strategies to improve housing stock by possibly pursuing the purchase and rehabilitation of existing properties, reducing blight and providing new opportunities for vested homeownership or safe rental housing.
- Organize advocacy efforts to streamline neighborhood clean-up, code enforcement, property acquisition, and redevelopment mechanisms in targeted areas.

Actions to Address Issues of Housing Quality:

- Pursue partnerships with neighborhood churches, resource churches and existing Community Development Corporations and/or other geographically focused improvement organizations.
- Support and participate in existing housing quality improvement programs (Habitat, SOS, Neighborhood Housing Opportunities, etc.)
- Organize advocacy efforts to strengthen code violation enforcement, landlord responsibility laws, and energy efficiency initiatives.
- Initiate an effort to aggregate information on home improvement, neighborhood development, and housing quality resources to distribute to church partners.

Housing Resources

- Ownership, Rental Costs and the Prospects of Building Home Equity: An Analysis of 100 Metropolitan Areas by Hye Jin Rho, Danilo Pelletiere and Dean Baker, published by the Center for Economic Policy and Research, and the Low Income Housing Coalition.
- Shared Urban Data System - <http://suds.memphis.edu> <<http://suds.memphis.edu>>
- Center for Community Building and Neighborhood Action (CBANA)- <http://cbana.memphis.edu/index.php>
- Neighborhood Housing Markets and the Memphis Model - Linking Information to Neighborhood Action in Memphis, Tennessee by Phyllis Betts – access via internet at: http://cbana.memphis.edu/Brookings/Neighborhood_Housing_Markets20061127_memphis.pdf
- Understanding Foreclosure and Strengthening Housing Markets in a Post-Subprime Environment by Phyllis Betts, CBANA- access via internet at: http://cbana.memphis.edu/Presentations/UnderstandingForeclosure_Betts.pps#293,1
- Bridging the Affordability Gap in the Memphis Housing Market – October 1997 article copyright University of Memphis – access via internet at: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/tradejournals/article/print/20057502.html>
- Restoring At Risk Communities: Doing it Together and Doing it Right by John M. Perkins
- Linking Arms, Linking Lives by Ronald Sider, et al
- Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life: Rethinking Ministry to the Poor by Robert D. Lupton
- A Heart for the Community: New Models for Urban and Suburban Ministry by John Fulder and Noel Castellanos
- When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
- Christian Community Development Association <http://www.cdda.org/>



Economic Development



A healthy, growing, vibrant, and inclusive economic landscape in Memphis is of paramount importance to the quality of life for all citizens of this community. The ability of people to find quality employment and to earn a decent wage to support their families or to start their own businesses offers a pathway to financial self-sufficiency.

Challenges abound to achieve such a worthy environment for all. In the midst of much economic success in the Memphis region, many of our citizens are left far behind. The church should consider the development of strategies to move all toward a new measure of financial success. Indeed, significant obstacles remain against true economic stability for many who call Memphis home:

- As in other major urban areas in our nation, 59% of children born live in poverty in our city and only 62.1% of high school seniors graduated in 2009.¹ People are simply unemployable because they lack the basic skills for almost any employment, such as reading and elementary math. According to a national study, every high school dropout contributes about \$60,000 less in taxes over a lifetime to the community's economic base.
- Overall unemployment exceeds 10%, compared to the national average of 9.6%.² A much deeper problem exists as reflected in the unemployment levels of African American males, estimated to be in excess of 20%. (In areas defined by the Center for Community Building and Neighborhood Action (CBANA) as distressed, the African-American male unemployment rate is estimated at 30%+). As Memphis keeps pace with and even exceeds national unemployment statistics, the U.S. Department of Education expects the literacy gap in America to widen, producing a shortage of 12 million qualified workers in the next decade.
- Underemployment is also a deep and abiding problem.
- An additional challenge has recently emerged related to the growing Hispanic and illegal immigrant population.

What is the role of the church in our city? What would “shalom” look like in the underserved and under-resourced areas where hope has no memory and despair is a daily companion? What is the call to action? Is there any real hope?

Economic Assets

Indeed, there are success stories already. Consider the success of an existing partnership between Advance Memphis—a parachurch organization serving the holistic needs of the people of zip code 38126, one of most under-resourced in the country—and National Guard Products, a manufacturing company that focuses on weather-stripping and threshold products. Advance Memphis and National Guard Products work together to place trained workers coming out of Foote & Cleaborn Homes into meaningful, full-time employment. However, the challenge remains great if we are to care for all the “least of these” who often need a helping hand, who need to know someone cares, and who need to sense there is hope, personally, for them. Advance Memphis displays that hope in a present, active force, but the need remains great for churches, parachurch ministries, government agencies, neighborhood churches, and others to partner together to bring economic opportunity to all of our citizens.

People are simply unemployable because they lack the basic skills for almost any employment.

Memphis is fortunate to have an economic development initiative called Memphis ED (Memphis Economic Development), which is a component of a larger community-wide initiative called Memphis Fast Forward,³ a partnership between city and county government, the Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce, and Memphis Tomorrow. Memphis Tomorrow is a consortium of corporate and civic leaders who represent most of the largest companies and organizations of influence. They have joined to seek and support ways and opportunities for Memphis to become a premier global city.

Memphis Fast Forward seeks to accomplish measurable progress in four primary areas:

- Governmental Efficiency
- Human Capital/Workforce Development
- Economic Development
- Public Safety

According to its leaders, this plan will “serve as a blueprint to make Memphis one of the most remarkable cities in the Southeast.” An excerpt from the plan reads as follows:

When the Memphis Fast Forward goals have been achieved by the end of 2012, our community will:

- Have 50,000 more jobs.
- Generate nearly \$85 million more in annual tax revenues from the expanded job base.
- Be among the safest communities of its size in the country.
- See improved student outcomes at all levels.
- Be positioned as a major economic center of the southern United States.

This information came from the Memphis Fast Forward website www.memphisfastforward.com. As a key component of Memphis Fast Forward, the Memphis ED plan serves as the economic-development engine that will contribute to the planned strategic growth of the Memphis economy. “Growing the pie” ultimately benefits all Memphians by improving the overall quality of life for every citizen.

The church has a distinctive role here. It is the opinion of the Economic Development Committee of The Shalom Project that the Memphis faith community can support and augment the existing strategies outlined in Memphis ED in a grassroots manner that leverages the human and physical (buildings/facilities that churches have in the neighborhoods) assets that area churches and faith-based organizations possess. We maintain that it is virtually indisputable that the church is better equipped than any other community entity to meet individuals where they are today and provide them with information, training, access, mentoring, encouragement, and resources to help all citizens take the necessary steps forward to achieve a life of economic contribution in Memphis. The primary point of contact with citizens in need of economic opportunity should be the neighborhood churches being in partnership with more resourced churches, parachurch organizations, relevant government agencies, and NGOs.

Economic Challenges:

The faith community’s alignment of its economic development objectives with the direction of existing strategic efforts requires understanding those specific goals in the Memphis ED plan to which the body of Christ might add distinct value and augment. This could be achieved by identifying areas of opportunity where combined efforts of the neighborhood church in partnership with others could directly touch and impact that neighborhood with a demonstration of God’s love, by helping people find economic opportunity and stability. Memphis ED is comprised of fifteen strategies established through comprehensive research and due-diligence by the Memphis business community and government leaders to position this community to achieve sustained growth and broader inclusion of citizens in the economic landscape.

The Shalom Project’s Economic Development Committee has identified four Memphis ED goals where the church might contribute to maximize the overall community impact of the collective economic development efforts of all partners involved:

Goal A

Develop a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Create a national entrepreneurship “center of excellence” to drive creation of high-value ventures and jobs.

Goal B

Market Memphis and Shelby County (internal).

Create an internal marketing campaign to boost local perceptions of Memphis as a great place to live, work and visit.

Goal C

Goal C of Memphis ED does not apply to the local church.

Goal D

Grow existing firms.

Grow market share of minority firms through an incubator and loan fund. Develop best-in-class business retention and an expansion program that includes an expanded supplier diversity initiative.

Goal E

Make Memphis a “place of choice” for knowledge workers.

Expand programming to recruit and retain knowledge workers.

Proposed Actions:

It is the opinion of the Economic Development Committee that the faith community's resources can be leveraged to help accomplish these four goals. What follows are the recommended faith-based tactical actions, with corresponding examples, derived from these overarching economic development goals.

Develop a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Memphis has a storied history of entrepreneurship and innovation in business. Homegrown businesses support recruitment efforts to relocate businesses in the Memphis area. Encouraging and inspiring business start-ups will result in increased local employment opportunities and the building and broadening of wealth in the Memphis community.⁴

Encouraging and inspiring business start-ups will result in increased local employment opportunities.

Faith-Based Opportunities:

At the neighborhood church, with support from parachurch and ministries and resource churches, there might be regularly scheduled business start-up seminars for those they serve who may be interested. This could also be a place where cottage industries or micro-enterprise efforts could be fostered and grown. In this way the neighborhood church and its partners can serve as a site-based, community conduit to the audience of local parishioners and neighbors who could benefit from the advice and assistance of these seasoned experts and loving followers of Jesus Christ. The members of the faith community also have needs for products, goods, and services. Outlining the broad categories of business-related needs of the faith community could also present immediate business lines for small businesses to serve.

Faith-based organizations could play an integral role in cultivating the next generation of local entrepreneurs and business leaders through after-school and summer programs. Power Center Academy, a charter-school affiliate of New Direction Christian Church, has a curriculum focused on educating and training its students in grades 6 through 8 in business, technology, and entrepreneurial innovation principles.

Faith-based organizations could help qualified students meet a specific financial need. Mayor Wharton has designed a program called STEP, which is intended to make sure our best and brightest get a chance to go to college or technical school. Most often, tuition is not the problem since various programs offer those monies. What is a problem is known as “last dollars,” those monies needed to buy clothes, books, bus fare, and cover other general costs of living. For a relatively small amount, many kids could be sent to college and given the skills to become contributing citizens and employable people. For every 1% the graduation rate from college increases in a community, \$1 billion is added in community domestic product.

Market Memphis and Shelby County (internal).

As Christians we are charged with spreading the good news of Jesus Christ, and as Memphians, we have an opportunity to spread the good news about positive and encouraging accomplishments in our city and county. Many Memphians have less than positive perceptions regarding life here. Under the banner of “One Memphis,” Mayor Wharton is asking for people to come together to solve shared challenges and to celebrate our goodness and successes.

A community-wide effort is underway to combat negative perceptions of Memphis—promulgated through the print and televised media—by sharing information about positive aspects of life here and by encouraging the optimists to become more vocal in speaking out. Perhaps there also needs to be a new “patriotism” for our city proclaimed from the pulpits of our churches. As Christians we are called to pray for and support those in authority over us as well as to speak truth to power when necessary, but we should never engage in negative, fruitless backbiting.

To this end, the Leadership Academy, through its “Speak Out” campaign, has seen several op-ed columns and letters to the editor published in the Commercial Appeal. It recently launched a web-based interface called MemphisConnect.com so that a diverse group of Memphians might share individual perspectives on the positives of life in Memphis. The Leadership Academy has also started a series of “Celebrate What’s Right” luncheons that provide opportunities for citizens to learn more about progressive initiatives and leaders working to move Memphis forward.



Faith-Based Opportunities:

Likewise, pastors and lay teachers across the city should be armed with information and call on the people in the pews to be excited and educated advocates for our city. A church-based “Speak Out” campaign could truly add to existing efforts to accentuate the positive happenings in Memphis. Shining a light on the work and accomplishments of such faith organizations as Neighborhood Christian Centers, Church Health Center, Memphis Athletic Ministries, Service Over Self, Southern Christian Leadership Conference–Memphis, Salvation Army/Kroc Center, MIFA, Memphis Leadership Foundation, Christ Community Health Services, and HOPE Christian Community Foundation would go a long way. An opportunity would also then exist to encourage these people of faith to become more vocal through writing letters to the editor, op-ed columns, and blog posts about this renewed, positive vision for Memphis. This could all contribute to improving our self-image as a community.

Grow existing firms.

The greatest growth opportunity in economic development lies in the potential expansion of existing local small businesses.⁵ Job creation, job growth, and capital investment are all direct outcomes of existing businesses thriving and being successful. The Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce coordinates state, local, and federal assistance for local businesses, encouraging their expansion through tax incentives and low-interest loan funds; it also promotes networking, training, and relationship building while providing research and information for the general public.

A key area of need here is minority business development and growth. It is estimated that during the past five years the minority business “spend” in the Memphis area is .80 (8 tenths of 1 percent) of total gross receipts. This unfortunate challenge represents incredible opportunity for growing local minority-owned businesses beyond the current baseline.

Faith-Based Opportunities:

The faith community is already a hub for referrals for social-support services such as healthcare, childcare, job-readiness, counseling, and housing. It could equally serve as a hub for referrals for goods and services that parishioners routinely use. The “Bust-A-Move Monday” (BAMM) model adopted by Pastor Kenneth Whalum, Jr. at The New Olivet Baptist Church has proven very successful. One Monday

each month, parishioners and friends of the church are directed (via information provided at Sunday service, email, and website) to a small minority-owned business to support by patronizing that establishment. This has proven beneficial for both the community and the businesses in terms of awareness that such a service, product, or experience exists as well as ensuring that communities remain strong with accessible services and amenities. This BAMM model could easily be adopted and emulated by other faith organizations yet tailored to the specific communities in which those organizations reside or serve.

Within the resourced churches of our community there are many people in positions of influence and leadership in businesses and organizations across the community. Educating and informing these lay leaders about the importance of economic development in the core city is a key ingredient for change.

By urging or even requiring their organizations or businesses to become pacesetters in minority economic development, these leaders could cause change to happen rapidly. Methodist Lebonheur and Memphis Light Gas & Water are two influential organizations who from the executive offices to the front line operations have prioritized minority business development and capacity building as core values.

The greatest growth opportunity in economic development lies in the potential expansion of existing local small businesses.

Resource churches have members who are key influencers and decision-makers who, as followers of Jesus, could address a number of ways their businesses or organizations could enhance minority business growth, build capacity of associated vendors, and create an atmosphere of equity for all.

It is a worthy goal to push for creation and growth in minority-owned business and to increase the share and size of the economic pie for everyone. Many small businesses suffer from a lack of financial resources and the business know-how to grow; thus they remain stagnant or decline, which then reflects the fate of the communities of which they are integral parts. Business leaders across



the community could greatly benefit small businesses with time and energy spent in helping them think through strategies of how to effectively grow both business and capacity.⁶

It is also essential that some methodology be developed to help young business people move up in their careers in Memphis. Historically, only 15% of all people will ever own a business; therefore, the other 85% will work for others. Employees need to be well-prepared to seize opportunities within the organizations where they work, and it seems intentional help in the neighborhood church might help people think about how they could improve their skill sets to grow as opportunity arises.

Again, resource churches have members who are leaders across the business community, who, as followers of Jesus, need to understand their responsibilities for the overall economic health of the city where God has placed them. Thus the need is for them to intentionally address how their companies or organizations might increase leadership on the issue of minority economic and business development. This includes setting priorities to do business with qualified minority firms and to also seek to hire, train, and promote qualified minorities within their organizations. Without senior leadership in business calling for this type of initiative, the chances are minimal for its success.

Make Memphis a “place of choice” for knowledge workers.

Over the past ten years, Memphis leadership has recognized and learned to value the talent residing here. Organizations such as MPACT Memphis, Leadership Memphis, 100 Black Men, The Leadership Academy Fellows, and NEXUS have targeted the young professional community to ensure that the next generation of leadership is equipped to address the challenges of life in Memphis and to call them to love the city and meet its challenges together.

Connecting these young citizens to one another is a key concept spanning all these organizations. These relationships serve as the foundation for finding common ground for the real work to begin to shape together the Memphis of the future. When individuals have deep connections and consider themselves vested in the welfare of the community, the prospect of leaving becomes a major negative. As a result, an active, engaged, and dedicated corps of young talent is a “magnet” that attracts and retains even more young talent.⁷

Faith-Based Opportunities:

Second Presbyterian Church, in collaboration with MPACT Memphis, established the NEXUS mentoring program to pair seasoned community leaders with aspiring young leaders to establish a relationship of trust, support, learning, and encouragement. The desired outcome is that there would be a continuous pipeline of young leaders being mentored and developed to serve the Memphis community with a spirit of love and faith. This model can be applied in any church or faith organization in the city. This presents a unique opportunity for the faith community to attract, cultivate, and retain the valuable pool of talent already living in Memphis.

An active, engaged, and dedicated corps of young talent is a “magnet” that attracts and retains even more young talent.

Recommendations:

- The Memphis faith community can support and augment the existing strategies outlined in Memphis ED of Memphis Fast Forward in a grassroots manner that leverages the human and physical assets that area churches and faith-based organizations possess.
- The church is better equipped than any other community entity to meet individuals where they are today and provide them with information, training, access, mentoring, encouragement, and resources to help all citizens take the necessary steps forward to achieve a life of economic contribution in Memphis.
- The primary point of contact with citizens in need of economic opportunity should be the neighborhood churches being in partnership with more resourced churches, parachurch organizations, relevant government agencies, and NGOs.

1 The Urban Child Institute Data Book 2009
 2 Memphis Regional Chamber of Commerce
 3 <http://memphisfastforward.com/MemphisED>
 4 Building the Memphis Biosciences Roadmap – Competencies and Niches, Technology Partnership Practice, Battelle Memorial Institute, January 2003
 5 Center City Commission Medical District Master Plan, Spring 2001
 6 Minority Business Development in Memphis, Texas Perspectives, August 2004
 7 It Takes More Than Schools to Close the Achievement Gap, New York Times, August 9, 2006



Community Involvement and Leadership Development



In every city, a need exists for visionary leaders who establish and sustain positive trajectories for community growth. Such leadership in both the civic and corporate communities is essential to a city's success. In the past decade, leadership development has shifted from strictly academic and personal to operation and connection to the broader community. As a result, emerging leaders must understand the dynamic histories and cultures of the cities where they have chosen to live, work, and play.

For the City of Memphis, the singular histories of music (Beale Street and the Blues, Sun Studios and Rock and Roll, Stax and R & B, WDIA) and entrepreneurship (Piggly Wiggly, Holiday Inn, AutoZone, and FedEx) serve as excellent examples of lasting, visionary leadership that originated in this city and spread far beyond the bounds of Shelby County. As we look ahead and seek ways to strengthen our community, it is important to re-establish our city as a new kind of distribution center: one of informed, capable, caring leaders successfully moving Memphis into the twenty-first-century global marketplace.

Community Leadership Assets:

Many organizations in the Memphis area already realize this essential need as a component to rich programs and services. To include all such organizations would be impossible. Therefore, this research focuses only on organizations (or programs within larger organizations) whose primary mission is that of leadership development for adults. More specifically for the purposes of this study, the Shalom Community Involvement and Leadership Development Committee reviewed information on those agencies with a primary focus on community involvement. Thus, programs and/or agencies classified in this area are those whose main focus is the development of future community leaders.

Innovative leaders are an important part of the equation, because they have to take on the status quo.

Leadership programs may be classified into three categories:¹

Community Involvement

Programs designed to encourage new leaders in the community.

Personal and Organizational Growth

Programs designed to enrich the leadership, team building, and organizational growth skills of participants.

Education

Programs designed to provide educational opportunities for leadership development. Although many programs listed have elements of all three, classification was made based upon the primary focus of the program/agency.

Leadership Memphis

The work of Leadership Memphis is focused on increasing the capacity of this city to become great by being resilient. We do this by identifying and challenging innovative leaders to become more engaged in the civic leadership of the community. Innovative leaders are an important part of the equation, because they have to take on the status quo - those who would prefer things stay as they are. Staying the same is not a viable strategy for any city in today's economy.²

Leadership Memphis offers three development programs to support this mission: (1) Executive Leadership, (2) Fast-Track Leadership, and (3) Grassroots Leadership. A major emphasis of theirs is bringing about innovative change by advancing diversity and inclusivity in the leadership of the city.

Leadership Academy

The Leadership Academy’s vision is a greater Memphis continually transformed and renewed by a diverse community of fully developed leaders. Their focus on building strong community leadership for Memphis has led to an infusion of empowered leaders taking action in this city.³

The Leadership Academy’s focus on building strong community leadership for Memphis has led to an infusion of empowered leaders taking action in this city.

MPACT Memphis

MPACT Memphis engages and supports today’s diverse, creative generation of young professionals who want to connect with each other and contribute their unique talents to the community.⁴

The program has three ways for young professionals to get involved: (1) Social networking, (2) Community Service, and (3) Civic Engagement.

NEXUS

Second Presbyterian Church and MPACT Memphis jointly developed NEXUS in 2003 as a vehicle for the development and improvement of leadership skills, as well as a means for participants to make valuable connections with leaders in the Memphis community. Relationship is the key component of the NEXUS experience. NEXUS is unique in that it seeks to duplicate the experienced leader and develop the young, emerging leader through mentorship and relationship.⁵

Memphis Leadership Foundation (MLF)

MLF exists to empower urban individuals and families through creative, innovative, and effective ministry and leadership. A heavy emphasis is on equipping and training indigenous leaders to effect change in the communities around them. MLF has a history of connecting communities of resource with communities of need.⁶

DownLine Ministries

DownLine Ministries exists to train and equip believers in Biblical disciple-making, enlisting them into a Great-Commission lifestyle. (The Great Commission refers to Jesus’s words to His disciples in Matthew 28: 19-20: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the

very end of the age.”) DownLine hosts institutes for men, women, and emerging leaders. This ministry aspires to reach the world through intense disciple-making. It is their goal to train spiritual leaders who are determined to make a difference in the wider world.⁷

Urban Youth Initiative (UYI)

UYI seeks to equip, empower, and support dedicated youth ministers and the local church/Christian community to effectively reach unchurched urban young people with the hope and love of Jesus Christ, and nurture their development into purposeful adulthood.

We recommend that there be a greater church emphasis on leader development.

Memphis Center for Urban Theological Studies (MCUTS)

MCUTS exists to provide affordable, accessible, Christ-centered theological education for leaders in the urban context in order to transform Memphis and the Mid-South for the Kingdom of Christ.

The following challenges impede greater use and success of the aforementioned programs:

- Awareness: Many of the leadership programs and agencies incur great expense to promote their offerings. Unfortunately, they remain unknown in many areas of the city where their services are needed.
- Access: While the programs and agencies identified are readily available, due to limited resources such as transportation, individuals who may benefit from the services are not able to access them.
- Funding: The programs that have experienced a measure of success could possibly serve significantly more potential and emerging leaders if properly funded to expand.



Recommendations:

The Shalom Community Involvement and Leadership Committee has identified ways the church might address the need to cultivate and increase the number of leaders in Memphis. Many bright high school students populate our city, students very capable of high achievement at the college level. Under-resourced students can gain access to school via various scholarship programs available through direct financial aid. In addition, a means to come alongside these collegiate students must be developed. We recommend that there be a greater church emphasis on leader development. This single recommendation has a three-pronged approach:

The church should work to recognize and identify ALL of the community's potential leaders.

We believe there are a number of individuals in the vulnerable areas of our city who, if identified, could be connected to leadership development opportunities and programs and thrive there. This should lead to an increased number of effective leaders.

The church should commit to youth-leader development.

We believe that many of the potential and emerging leaders of our community may be found in those who work with at-risk youth in vulnerable areas of the city. Here again, we see an opportunity for churches to identify and support local youth leaders. Churches can also serve as connectors to urban youth-leader development programs. A commitment to the support of youth leadership will enable the church to further establish and sustain relationships with the next generation of leaders.

The church should commit to theological training within the urban context.

We believe that the message of the gospel is essential and relevant to meet the current challenges of our city. However, the church must be intentional about developing its leaders to apply this message in a specifically urban setting with a culturally sensitive, humble approach.

Conclusions:

An army of potential and emerging leaders throughout the city of Memphis awaits the call. Shalom should explore church-sponsored programs for identifying and supporting leaders. Existing parachurch ministries with a focus on urban-leader development should be engaged to discuss how site-based work in neighborhood churches could be developed and enhanced. A pilot project should be developed to match the resources of volunteers from the broader Memphis area with a neighborhood church that has a passion for cultivating the leadership population in existence there. This local church should connect with an experienced parachurch organization in a neighborhood (where present) to focus on the specific skill sets required to meet the needs of that area.

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- 1 Compilation of the Christian Brothers University, Center for Ethical Leadership
 - 2 <http://www.leadershipmemphis.org/aboutUs.aspx>
 - 3 <http://www.leadershipacademy.org>
 - 4 <http://www.mpactmemphis.org>
 - 5 <http://www.nexusleaders.org/about>
 - 6 <http://www.mfonline.org>
 - 7 <http://www.downlineministries.com>



Arts and Entertainment



The City of Memphis is known worldwide for its diverse cultural assets, perhaps best for the history and continuing force of its music. A significant concentration of cultural and artistic attractions for the Mid-South are located in and around Memphis to serve the greater region. These resources include centers for the performing and visual arts, history and science museums, and the national award-winning Memphis Zoo and Aquarium.

Still, the need for effective access and educational opportunities related to the arts remains pressing. And, to underline the importance of viewing the arts as essential rather than esoteric, a study conducted by Americans for the Arts revealed the following:

Arts in the schools increase test scores and lower dropout rates. The Arts Education Partnership's publication, *Critical Links*, contains 62 academic research studies that, taken together, demonstrate that arts education helps close the achievement gap, improves academic skills essential for reading and language development, and advances students' motivation to learn. (Source: Arts Education Partnership)

More opportunities for exposure to the arts must be made known to children in vulnerable and distressed neighborhoods.

Locally, organizations like ArtsMemphis, Watoto de Africa, and Hattiloo Theater provide avenues for arts education and artistic expression, but all remain grossly underutilized. Each provides rich and rewarding services; what is needed are community advocates who specifically promote arts education and seek ways to use the arts in nontraditional settings to instigate change. More opportunities for exposure to the arts must be made known to children in vulnerable and distressed neighborhoods. The neighborhood church provides the perfect resource of people and facilities to raise the level of awareness of the arts in these communities.

Memphis Cultural and Arts Assets:

According to the Memphis Region Sourcebook (2001), the area's arts and cultural resources are located in three main clusters:¹

- The Downtown and Midtown areas that includes Beale Street, Mud Island, Hattiloo Theater, the Blues Foundation, the Rock 'n' Soul Museum, the National Civil Rights Museum and various visual and performing arts venues, including the state-of-the-art Cannon Center (Downtown), and the new Playhouse on the Square (Midtown).
- The Overton Park area that includes the Brooks Museum of Art, the Memphis Zoo and Aquarium, and the Memphis College of Art.
- The third cluster includes the University of Memphis visual and performing arts facilities, The Pink Palace Museum, and Audubon Park, which features the Dixon Gallery and Gardens and the adjacent Theatre Memphis.

In addition, Germantown Parkway boasts Ballet Memphis and the Germantown Performing Arts Center. Also important to note are the many other events that draw upon a regional audience such as the International Barbecue Championship, part of the widely known Memphis in May International Festival, which has a significant impact on the Memphis metropolitan area.

ArtsMemphis, whose mission is “raising funds to ensure excellence in the arts and build a vibrant cultural community for everyone” in the City of Memphis, has reported the economic impact of the arts on the city and region:²

- Raises over \$100 million annually
- Accounts for 3,616 full-time jobs
- Generates \$9 million in local and state government revenue
- Influences an estimated 69,862 households (out of a potential 471,887) in the area
- Currently impacts zip codes 38103 (Downtown) followed by 38120 (the part of East Memphis nearest to Germantown) at the most significant levels. (Source: Artsmemphis.org)

Given this information, current circumstances beg church involvement for the promotion of arts in our broader community. Before discussing those opportunities, the Arts and Entertainment Committee identified current assets related to specific challenges that face the Memphis community.

Some efforts currently underway that seek to promote awareness of the arts and cultural assets in the city and region are:

ArtsMemphis ACT program

70% of the 11,000 students involved in the ArtsMemphis ACT program (arts education—not the standardized test) are economically disadvantaged and on the free or reduced lunch program. The ACT program is only available in 38 of 160 Memphis City Schools.

Student Ticket Subsidy

The Student Ticket Subsidy program, funded by the Tennessee General Assembly and administered in cooperation with the Tennessee Arts Commission (TAC), provides funds to public school students to attend arts and cultural events for free or at a greatly reduced rate.

Arts Access

Arts Access is an annual outreach program sponsored by ArtsMemphis that ensures the arts are available to those who cannot always afford the price of admission, in the belief that art exists to be explored, experienced, and appreciated by everyone.

Varied programs provided independently by arts organizations in the city

An example of this type of effort would be the After School Acting Program at Playhouse on the Square (ASAP). After School Acting Program sites exist throughout Memphis and the surrounding area at local churches, synagogues, schools, and community centers.

Local media coverage

While a formal program or campaign does not exist, it is important to note that recent strides have been made by local media to raise awareness of grassroots organizations and artists of the city.

The following challenges impede greater success of the aforementioned programs, and others:

Funding

Few institutions exist that are dedicated solely to providing funding to support arts programs. Exposing entire under-resourced communities to the arts thus becomes difficult.

Transportation

Communities with limited resources do not have direct, fluid access to programs outside their immediate neighborhoods. This creates the basic inability to experience or participate in these programs.

Arts exposure for certain zip codes

As previously noted, the greatest concentration of households touched by the arts is found in zip codes 38103 (Downtown) and 38120 (far East Memphis). These two areas represent upward trending communities of affluence and neighborhoods where people who have the means choose to live.

“Grassroots” organizations and individual artists receive relatively small amounts of financial support.

Three specific dynamics affect arts development at this basic level:

- The group or artist must be a nonprofit organization to receive funding. Unless individual and collective artists align themselves with nonprofits, they cannot get support as easily.
- These groups and artists have shorter “artistic life” because of lack of funding.
- Where a clear arts influence is least present in the city, there is a sporadic presence of grassroots art as well.



Recommendations:

The Shalom Arts and Entertainment Committee has identified opportunities for churches to raise an awareness and appreciation for the arts in Memphis. As previously stated, Memphis has a wide variety of the arts and cultural assets. The fact that the majority of Memphis households touched by the arts are highly concentrated in an upward trending neighborhood (Downtown) and a neighborhood of choice (East Memphis) is troubling. As we seek ways to support and establish healthy churches to develop healthy communities, connecting local, neighborhood churches to the arts provides a means to that end. The Arts and Entertainment Committee recommends the following:

Churches must develop or rekindle a value and an appreciation for the arts.

In the contemporary church, an unspoken and unwritten line has been drawn between artists and the church. A paradigm shift must take place to allow the church to embrace the artists in its midst and in the broader community. The displayed gifts and talents of these individuals and groups are the expression of the inherent God-given desire within all of us to reflect beauty. The church needs to be reminded of this dynamic and to explore increasing its understanding and knowledge of varied artistic genres and how best to support local artists within the church setting.

Churches should provide avenues for artistic expression.

As with any skill, repetition and opportunities to express or apply that skill enable the practitioner to perfect it. Many neighborhood churches have facilities perfectly suited for artistic expression. An approach of opening the church doors to artistic expression creates an environment where relationships between church leaders and artists may be forged. These relationships could possibly lead to the discovery and cultivation of young artistic talents within the urban core.

Churches should provide support for youth in arts programs.

Churches should seek ways to support the funding and participation in youth programs such as the aforementioned programs of Watoto de Africa, Hattiloo Theater, and ArtsMemphis. Of course, this review is not an exhaustive one; yet it adequately highlights the clear imperative for neighborhood church involvement to raise awareness and fill our cultural “pipeline” with emerging artistic talent that might otherwise be stifled.

Conclusions:

Memphis has played a significant role in our nation’s rich heritage of music and the broader performing arts. Names such as Isaac Hayes, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, and Carl Perkins still hang in the air. Memphis continues to produce talented young artists, as evidenced by the number of young American Idol contestants from the Memphis area who make it as far as Hollywood for the final competition. Worth noting anecdotally is that many of these Memphis-area finalists often have one thing in common: a church. A church where young kids are exposed, week after week, to church music by singing in the choir or singing solos and performing before entire congregations. This environment allows young people to discover and nurture their love of music and the performing arts. Thus the churches in Memphis, both large and small, have served to be a proving ground for talents worth sharing with the community and the nation.

An approach of opening the church doors to artistic expression creates an environment where relationships between church leaders and artists may be forged.

Shalom should explore church-sponsored programs for arts education. Existing parachurch ministries and nonprofit organizations with a focus on promoting awareness of the arts should be engaged to discuss how site-based work in neighborhood churches might be best developed and enhanced. A pilot project should be developed to match the resources of outside volunteers with neighborhood churches that have a passion for youth and the arts, as well as matching volunteers to any experienced parachurch or nonprofit organizations focused on neighborhoods with a high concentration of at-risk children and youth.

Neighborhood churches are already well positioned to be hubs for broader community engagement. We should explore partnerships with the arts community, beneficial for all, with the specific goal of stimulating creativity and providing environments of meaningful artistic involvement in neighborhoods starved for such vital expression.

1 Memphis Region Sourcebook (2001)

2 www.ArtsMemphis.org

Appendix

The Shalom Project Steering Committee

Larry Jensen *Chairman*

Fenton Wright *Shalom Project Manager*

Stephanie Butler

Trina Jones

Scott Wilson

Spiritual Health

Josh Patrick, *Team Leader*

Public Safety

John Holmes, *Co-Team Leader*

Peggie Russell, *Co-Team Leader*

Family Life

Sharon Cash, *Co-Team Leader*

Dorothy Cox, *Co-Team Leader*

Education

Tony Hodges, *Co-Team Leader*

Tim Ware, *Co-Team Leader*

Health

Allyson Dyer, *Co-Team Leader*

Dr. Teresa Cutts, *Co-Team Leader*

Housing and Revitalization

Chris Acuff, *Co-Team Leader*

Lon Magness, *Co-Team Leader*

Economic Development

Bernal Smith, *Co-Team Leader*

Darrell Cobbins, *Co-Team Leader*

Community Involvement and Leadership Development

Charles Elliott, *Co-Team Leader*

Rene Burton, *Co-Team Leader*

Arts and Entertainment

Darius Wallace, *Co-Team Leader*

Jazmin Miller, *Co-Team Leader*

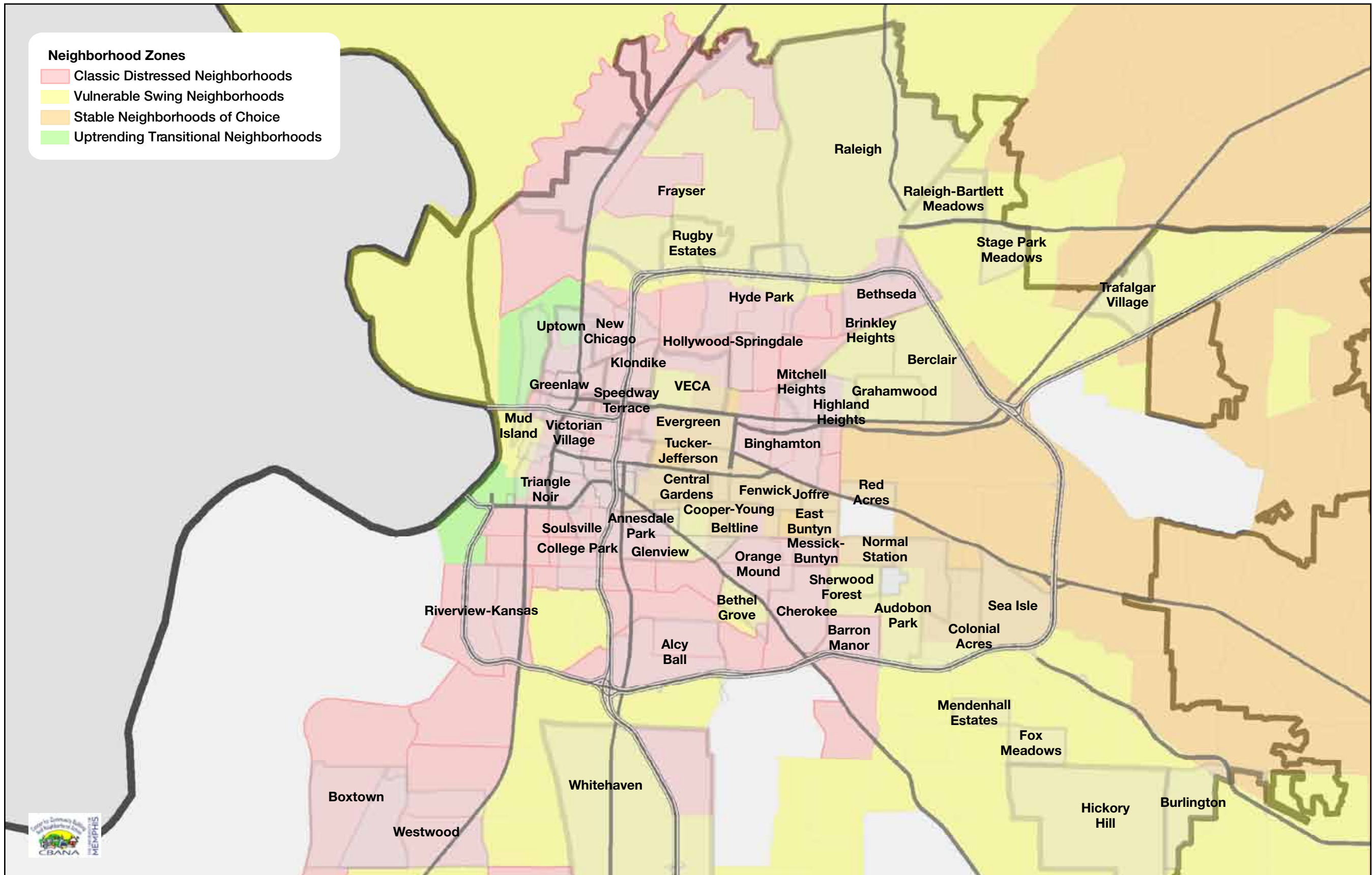
Race Relations/Politics

Charlie Caswell, *Team Leader*

Memphis Area Neighborhood Zones



Memphis, TN



Completed Foreclosures 2009



Memphis, TN

