Ministry In Abandoned Places

The 3 Rs of Reaching Out

Church Focused on Relocation, Reconciliation, Redistribution

On Ministries in the World, not Members

Rev. Ron Robinson, The Welcome Table missional community

www.athirdplace.org www.progressivechurchplanting.blogspot.com follow us on facebook at TheWelcomeTable Mission, and The Welcome Table GardenPark also learn more at our www.missionalprogressives.blogspot.com

1. Video and Slideshow of Our Presence in the 74126 zipcode of Tulsa—what 3-12 people in worship accomplish by turning their church inside out and connecting first with neighbors and partners

2. Our 3Rs Missional Transformation that is Transforming Our Community—Rev. Ron Robinson


4. Questions from the Gathered

How to Help: Go to www.faithify.org and donate to our ministry projects:

1. Kitchen Greenhouse Community at our GardenPark and Orchard where abandoned houses once were. $6,000

2. Missional Community Room to serve our neighbors and create hospitality for those (you) coming to stay and serve and learn with us. $7,500.

45 days to raise the funds; all or nothing campaign; you are not charged unless the full amount is raised; during the campaign your money is put in escrow and returned to your account if the full amount is not achieved. Please Share Widely. Join the Online Facebook Event for support of both projects:

Come Stay and Serve and Learn in our “University of Poverty” With Us: contact revronrobinson@gmail.com 918-691-3223
If you come just for a half or full day, no overnight, a “love offering” per person recommended.
Overnight stays: Daily fee, no meals provided by us: $10 per person; one meal provided, $20 per person; two meals, $30 per person. Lodging on site or in area included. Scholarships may be available.
Quick Look at the 74126 74130 McLain/Turley Area

46th to 76th St. North, Tulsa

1. We die 14 years sooner than in 74114 6 miles away

2. Rated Second Worse Zipcode in Tulsa for health outcomes: 1 best 5 worst scale, the 74126 is 4.320 and our neighbor 74106 is worst at 4.570. 74130 we serve is 3.950 fifth worst. 74114 is 2.150. Worst health care access rates.

3. 2009 OU and Third Place Foundation nutrition study: 60 percent can’t afford healthy food; 55 percent worry about amount of food they have; 55 percent worry about the amount of food they have; 6 percent use spoiled food; 29 percent adults skip meals.

4. 2013 OU and Third Place Foundation study at our Food Pantry: 52.6 percent high food insecurity; 42.1 percent very high food insecurity, experiencing hunger symptoms when surveyed; 68.4 percent of households have at least one member with nutrition-related chronic disease; 53 percent depression; 47 percent anxiety; 53 percent high blood pressure; 32 percent high cholesterol; 47 percent obese and 21 percent overweight. Sample demographic at food pantry: 68 percent women, 42 percent black, 36 percent white, 63 percent under $10,000 annual household income; 5 percent employed, 47.4 percent disabled, 42 percent less than high school education and 16 percent high school education.

5. Historical Abandonment: current 40 percent of vacant homes are abandoned, not for sale or rent; McLain Shopping Center, Northridge Shopping Center, Suburban Acres Shopping Center once thriving now virtually abandoned; in 2011, three elementary schools in the zipcode closed (one more in 2012 when a public charter school was started); the post office was closed. One community pool threatened with closure this year. Lack of public transportation options available elsewhere. Gap has
grown between neighborhood residents and their elected officials who now serve area some five or more times larger than before.

6. Roughly 50 percent soon will be under 18 and more than 60 years old. Projection for 2015: 12,590 residents, 73.4 percent African-American, 15.6 percent white, 7.3 percent American Indian and other; 3.5 percent Hispanic. In our service area split between incorporated far north Tulsa and unincorporated Turley, white population in Turley will remain slight majority in 2015 but down to 52 percent. College graduates: 7.6 percent.

7. Cultural Change, 1967 to 1987: white working class (with professional and business owners living in area as well) changed to predominantly black working class and then to rising underclass. Racism of segregation led to racism of "white flight" (and flight of business owners, professionals, service providers who worked in area but lived elsewhere), and drop in job availability for those who lived here who often have to leave area to get work, and drop of services private and public, and switch from home ownership to rental.

8. Renewal efforts: A Third Place Community Foundation community center food store and community garden/park and orchard by The Welcome Table missional community, The Dream Center by Victory Christian Church, Tulsa Health Department North Regional Wellness Center, EduRec by World Won Ministries, Newsome Community Farms, Real Good Food Truck Mobile Grocery, Sarah’s Residential Living, McLain School Foundation, OU Tisdale Clinic (just outside of our area but serves our area), new efforts underway also close by through Crossover Impact and Crossover Bible Church, and ongoing work by remaining schools, parks, churches, Turley Community Association, Turley Fire and Rescue Volunteer Dept, and one civic group, the Turley Odd Fellows Lodge.
The Welcome Table Missional Community/A Third Place Community Foundation

Renewing The Far Northside: Volunteer Grassroots Response

History:

Epiphany Church began in Owasso in 2002-03;

moved to 6305 N. Peoria Ave. Turley/McLain School area in 2004;

became The Living Room Church in 2005 and began partnering with Turley Community Association and Cherokee School on beautification projects

Opened A Third Place Community Center at 6416 N. Peoria Ave. and moved in it in 2007, began working with OU Graduate Social Work program on community forums;

hosted OU Health Clinic in 2008;

created A Third Place Community Foundation in 2009, began demonstration gardening with Turley United Methodist Church and providing school gardens and landscaping for Cherokee Elementary School and helped form McLain School Foundation;

bought a block of abandoned houses and trashed property at 6005 N. Johnstown Ave. in 2010 to begin transforming into a community gardenpark;

bought an abandoned church building at 5920 N. Owasso Ave. and moved the community center into it in 2011, and planted the community orchard;

created The Welcome Table Free Corner Store Food Pantry in 2012.

Area We Serve:

Primarily from 46th St. N. to 76th St. N. and from Highway 75 to Osage County Line; all within the McLain School boundary; far north Tulsa and Turley community area but our food store also serves the Sperry area. We are located in 74126, one of the lowest income zipcodes in the Tulsa area with a life expectancy 14 years lower than midtown Tulsa. 12,500 people.
Current Offerings:

Twice a Week Free Food Store; 4-5 times a year Mobile Pantry giving out 5 tons of food in one hour; occasional Mobile Eatery from Food Bank

Computer Center/Free Wifi....Free Books....Clothes and More (take what you need; leave what you can)....Community Art Studio and Art Events...Washer/Dryer...Community Recycling Bin...Weekly 12-Step Recovery

Community Holiday Events and Festivals...Monthly Community Planning...Monthly Turley Area Seniors

Community Garden Park and Orchard and Free weekly meals at the Park

Current Community Projects

Abandoned Properties: Demolition or Upkeep....66th and N. Lewis Intersection Transformation...Welcome to Turley Sign Project...Roadside Wildflowers/Trash Pickup....Prairie Trails Wildflower Preservation Rest Area

Planting Project Seeds: In Conversation or In Vision

Cherokee School Repurposing...Scattered Site Low Rent Housing Program, plus “Relocation Homes” transforming abandoned homes....Osage Prairie Trail Awareness and Appreciation Event(s) and Community Info Kiosks...Far North Main Street from 46th to 66th St. on N. Peoria Ave....Community Lay Health Advocate Program (turning health clinics inside out)

Current Partners

University of Oklahoma-Tulsa...Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma...Tulsa Health Department North Regional Wellness Center...Tulsa Food Security Council...Tulsa Community Gardening Association...McLain School Foundation...Turley Community Association...Turley United Methodist Church...Turley Fire and Rescue Dept...Tulsa County O’Brien Park and Recreation...Sarah’s Residential Living Center...Newsome Community Farms...Oklahoma State University Extension Dept...The Lighthouse/Gilcrease Elementary Schools...Tulsa Sponsoring Committee, Industrial Areas Foundation.

www.turleyok.blogspot.com www.progressivechurchplanting.blogspot.com www.missionalprogressives.blogspot.com Follow us on Facebook
The Missional Church Background

Revronrobinson@aol.com

1. We have entered an era where we need a “bigger bandwidth” of church manifestations because we are not in a one-size fits all world any longer. People increasingly are finding spiritual community and relationships outside of congregations. Barna’s projection: 70 percent in 2000 connected in congregations; down to 35 percent in 2025; will be co-equal with alternative faith communities, and close behind will be communities based on popular culture media and arts.

2. Terms. Missional: Being Sent, to Serve. Not necessarily the same as a Church Mission, or Mission Statement; The opposite of old style “Missionary” church which went to others to convert them to become the church; the mission-al church goes to be with others and to be converted (especially in focus and in forms) by them, and their needs, in order to better serve. “Mission Field” is the place where church becomes itself missionally, where it is sent, and lives out its covenant with the world beyond it; it is the answer to the question who does the church exist for, why does it exist, and in particular for whom does one’s heart (or God’s heart) break for? Can be very narrow and specific, such as one apartment complex or school or zipcode or group of people struggling with a specific situation. “Missional Community” can be on its own, or connected with others and with a church or group of churches; can be various sizes though usually core groups no more than 12 to 20. Can be Two or More. Other names often associated are Incarnational Church, Externally-Focused Church, New Monastic. It is sometimes seen as a category of the “Emergent or Emerging Church” but Emergent is most often seen as a postmodern worship reformation movement, with missional overtones and connections; Missional in focus usually includes worship, but doesn’t have to, and worship may be with various churches as well as or in place of its own worshipping group.
3. The Shift from The Churched Culture where Church was Primary and Mission Field was secondary and was a resource for the church, to Unchurched/DeChurched Culture where church has been marginalized and Mission Field has become Primary, so church now must flow toward the mission field rather than expecting the mission field to flow toward it. 

In the old culture, Church found its mission in how it differentiated itself from other churches, which put the focus on the church institutionally and making more members was its mission, especially if it was a church where most of its members came from other churches; this put added stress on institutional membership; in the emerging culture, where mission field is primary, as the external community put less focus on churches, the churches increased their focus on themselves. “The mission” used to be to perpetuate churches in a world where the “missional field” flowed toward the church; but in a world where the church as institution has been marginalized, and the missional field has become primary, so too the church should shift from focusing on building itself up to engagement with and building up the world around it, its missional field. The movement resulted in movement from focus on membership to ministries in the world with or without people who identify as members or even as adherents to a particular church or faith.

4. Church Doesn’t Have or Create A Mission; The Mission Creates and Has The Church. Theologically speaking, the mission of the church, or ecclesiology, is a salvific, healing response, soteriology, to the suffering and the ways that we have been separated, hamartiology, from the image of God and from the aims of that Imago Dei being manifest in beloved community. So we are to be oriented toward those who are suffering; suffering comes in many forms. Discover the suffering you are called to address and create church to respond to it.

Church is not to be content to be a safe home until all homes are safe. Church is not to be content to be growing and thriving in a community that is suffering and declining. Don’t be the best church IN your community, but be the best church FOR your community. Start making shifts in focus From internal to external ministries, from program
development to people development, from church-based to world-based leadership.

5. Four Paths, or The Loop, of Church-ing: 1. Missional Service; 2. Community Life in order to better serve; 3. Discipleship/Leadership in order to have healthier communities in order to better serve; 4. Worship that refreshes the soul and deepens the community and sparks the desire for discipleship/leadership for the missional service.

6. Focus not on “a church” but on “the church” which can have many manifestations. Church not a what, but a who; Church anywhere, anytime, by anyone. Grow smaller to do bigger things.

12 Marks of New Monasticism (many of these can be easily adopted by theologically diverse groups in case of #6, and in the case of #8 can be expanded)
1. "Relocation to Abandoned Places of Empire."
2. "Sharing Economic Resources with Fellow Community Members."
3. "Hospitality to the Stranger."
4. "Lament for Racial Divisions Within the Church and Our Communities Combined with the Active Pursuit of a Just Reconciliation."
5. "Humble Submission to Christ's Body, the Church."
7. "Nurturing Common Life Among Members of Intentional Community."
8. "Support for Celibate Singles Alongside Monogamous Married Couples and Their Children."
9. "Geographical Proximity to Community Members Who Share a Common Rule of Life."
10. "Care for the Plot of God’s Earth Given to Us Along with Support of Our Local Economies."
12. "Commitment to a Disciplined Contemplative Life."
The typical foundation of a church

This teaches "church" = the worship service

The MISSIONAL foundation of a church

Creates the ethos of a common mission and teaches that the people of God on a mission = the church. People say, "We are the church during the week, and we all gather together for worship on the weekend." Individuals ask, "How can I contribute to the mission of this community?"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTRACTIONAL</th>
<th>MISSIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church is place</td>
<td>Church is people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeker-targeted</td>
<td>Seeker-mindful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism inside</td>
<td>Evangelism outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program-driven</td>
<td>Improvisational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missions as program</td>
<td>Missions as purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth is numbers</td>
<td>Growth is health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stats</td>
<td>Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>Simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally relevant</td>
<td>Culturally engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm, established</td>
<td>Flexible, organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserve organization</td>
<td>Organization is expendable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Organism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship as attraction</td>
<td>Worship as reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preaching as application</td>
<td>Preaching as proclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend as event</td>
<td>Weekend as assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradual, implicit gospel</td>
<td>Regular, explicit gospel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background on the 3Rs

Relocation, Reconciliation, Redistribution

Comes from the life and work of the civil rights leader and community development activist and African American pastor and author John Perkins of Mississippi who moved back to the south in the heart of the civil rights struggle, was jailed and beaten, and grew ministries that greatly impacted his community, launching a national organization and 3Rs movement. www.ccda.org. He has also been an influence on the new monastic movement and the new friars movement. See the books by Shane Claiborne and Scott Bessenecker. It is a “holistic church” approach, as he often says, that truly balances worship, learning, living in community, and service instead of churches that spend so much time and energy and resources on “proclaiming a message” that they don’t make practicing and embodying their faith, making it real in the world, equally as or more important.

Form missional teams in an abandoned place with Remainers, Returners, Relocators for they each have their particular experiences and gifts.

Relocation:

Go where the need is, not where the numbers are.

A spectrum of ways to relocate: from moving in to poverty areas to spending time, money, resources in them and forming relationships there on a regular basis even if you live elsewhere at the moment.

Relocating helps you to truly understand the “felt needs” of those in need and therefore is critical to understanding your mission. Spend time learning from those in the area before you relocate there.

To every fear expressed about relocating, Perkins would respond: “That’s why you need to go.”

The Relocation Strategy:

A. get to know the area by working with others in it or working with a group that works with the poor in another area.

B. Share your vision with the church.
C. Form a ministry team.

D. Become a community with your team for over a year or two.

E. Get special training for your team or a big part of it.

F. Choose the community of most needs.

G. Outline a target area: this is important as we have a tendency to take on too much and dilute our relationship power; he says if the community has a lot of subdivisions then your target area might be simply six blocks; if it is an area of apartments your area might be one single apartment complex.

H. Build relationships and allow even the friends you have made first to help you choose where to live and to point you to it.

I. Listen to the people, visit them, invite them. Plan to stay. (He encourages people to commit to 15 years).

J. Once you begin to act, begin with bible study or prayer group.

K. Work with children.

L. Raise up indigenous leaders to take over what you start.

M. Join or establish a church in the area; join is the first and best option, but if can’t find healthy one, start one.

N. Respond to the needs, begin the redistribution.

O. In developing leaders to help you in the work of the 3Rs, I like to use and adapt his three ways of recognizing gifted people to work with: those who evidence

1. “people of peace” (Luke 10); non-anxious presences, people of inner abundance even amid much external scarcity;

2. Servanthood, are they willing to be led, see where their growing edges are?

3. Fellowship, are they comfortable participating in all aspects of community?
Reconciliation:

For Perkins, and for us, Reconciliation is most directly focused on racial and ethnic reconciliation, giving the history of our service area and its current demographics. But reconciliation is a broader mission that includes all kinds of ways the culture tends to disrupt and divide and oppress peoples.

Reconciliation is the ongoing spiritual work of vulnerability, trust, forgiveness, letting others from a less privileged position take leads and be teachers; it means working on reconciliation with those within the ministry team as well, and with our closest neighbors, all of which can be tougher than a vague commitment to meeting with and working with people across ethnic, etc lines.

It means not being too illusioned at the onset of relationships and relocation that it turns into deep disillusionment and causes us to leave.

Don’t rush into the third R of redistribution without not only working on relocation but seeking reconciliation; this is what will help shape and inform the redistribution work.

Perkins points out that a church working on reconciliation won’t be a consumer church because it is not what people are seeking to engage with; it goes against the grain of church adopting the homogenous unit principle of people seeking and staying with those like themselves.

Reconciliation begins with the person and the church reconciling, or keeping in balance or right relationships, their polarities of Doing (action) and Being (reflection and nurture). The challenges of relocation (returning, remaining) and the hard work of redistribution can only be met with the centerpiece of reconciliation focus.

Redistribution:

This is scary to many because it focuses on shared common goods as well as sharing the Common Good. We tend to think of people who do this as “saints” but that is a way to distance ourselves from the calling of engaging in redistribution.

There is not just one model. Not only the person and family and church commit to sharing goods, but also working to see that government does its job of caring
for the vulnerable with resources, and calling on businesses to invest in
abandoned places and projects and partners, and for a variety of non profits to
be created or nurtured in the areas.

Commitment to a “God’s Dream” Economy vs. the “American Dream” economy.
Also not just focusing on people as receivers of goods, but helping to create
them as producers, owners of businesses; that way they grow community
health by already living in the area and not like business people who use the
area but live elsewhere.

Church as an economic institution for the impoverished area, employing
neighbors and helping to start and spin off businesses.
Books For Learning More About Missional Church:

*The Almost Church Revitalized, and Church Do's and Don'ts and The Church We Yearn For, by Michael Durall;

*Missional Renaissance and also Missional Communities by Reggie McNeal;

*The Shaping of Things To Come, and The Faith of Leap, by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch;

*Exiles by Frost, and The Forgotten Ways by Hirsch; and On The Verge by Hirsch and David Ferguson;

The Road to Missional by Michael Frost; The Permanent Revolution by Hirsch and Tim Crimmin; Right Here, Right Now by Alan Hirsch and Lance Ford

Introducing the Missional Church, and also Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood, by Alan Roxburgh

Launching Missional Communities by Mike Breen

The Abundant Community by John McNight and Peter Block, see also McKnight's Turning Communities Inside Out

Christianity Rediscovered by Vincent Donovan;

*Welcoming Justice, and Let Justice Roll Down, and With Justice For All, and Restoring At-Risk Communities, by John Perkins, and Follow Me To Freedom by Perkins and Shane Claiborne

*The Irresistible Revolution by Shane Claiborne,

Houses That Change The World, Wolfgang Simson,

*Change The World by Michael Slaughter

Emerging Church by Ryan Bolger and Eddie Gibbs,

The Organic Church, and Search and Rescue, and Church 3.0 by Neil Cole,

Life of the Beloved by Henri Nouwen,

*The New Conspirators by Tom Sine,

*The New Friars, and also Living Mission by Scott Bessenecker,

*The Tangible Kingdom, and The Gathered AND Sent Church, and Bivo, by Hugh Halter and/or Matt Smay;

The New Monasticism and School(s) for Conversion, and The Awakening of Hope, by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove,

Economy of Love, by Claiborne and others
The Church is Flat, by Tony Jones
Revolution, by George Barna, Pagan Christianity by Frank Viola, UnChristian by David Kinnamon;
The Secret Message of Jesus, by Brian McLaren
American Religion: Contemporary Trends, by Mark Chavez
Church Morph by Eddie Gibbs,
Reimagine The World by Bernard Brandon Scott,
Under The Radar by Bill Easum,
An Altar in the World and Leaving Church by Barbara Brown Taylor,
Planting Missional Churches by Ed Stetzer,
Inside The Organic Church by Bob Whitesel.
Lyle Schaller's books especially Discontinuity and Hope, and The New Contexts For Ministry, and What We Have Learned, and Small Congregation, Big Potential, and From Geography to Affinity;
Postmodern Pilgrims by Leonard Sweet
The House Church Manual by William Tenny-Brittain
Small Church At Large, Robin Trebilcock.