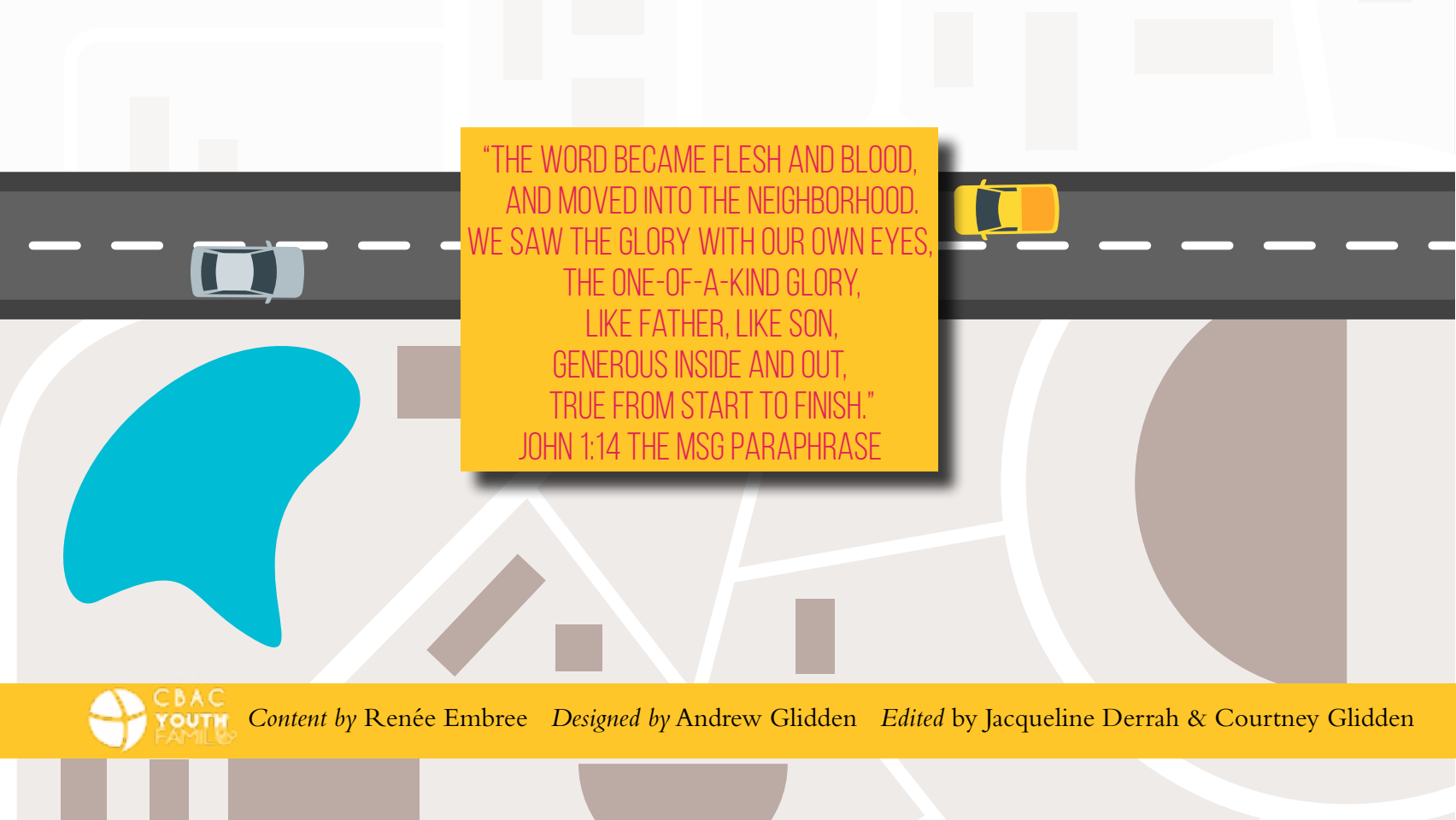


NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK



CANADIAN BAPTISTS
of ATLANTIC CANADA



"THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND BLOOD,
AND MOVED INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
WE SAW THE GLORY WITH OUR OWN EYES,
THE ONE-OF-A-KIND GLORY,
LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON,
GENEROUS INSIDE AND OUT,
TRUE FROM START TO FINISH."
JOHN 1:14 THE MSG PARAPHRASE



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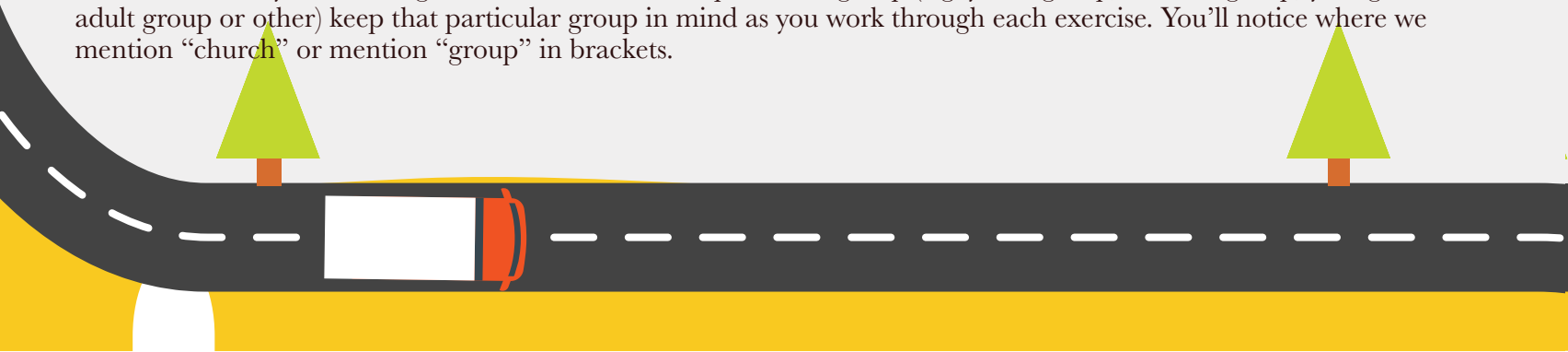
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INTRODUCTION

This is to be used as a tool for assessing and understanding your church and neighbourhood. This is intended for a small group of church leaders to work through together. The goal is to help you understand your neighbourhood and begin discerning what it might look like for your congregation to get outside the walls of your church more faithfully to join God in your neighbourhoods. The church leaders who agree to work through this resource could be: a Deacons or Elders Board, a group of Youth Leaders, a Christian Education Board, a Staff Team or a group of people from your church who are simply passionate about joining God in your neighbourhood.

If you are working through this tool as leaders of a church, keep the whole church in mind throughout each exercise. If you are using this tool as leaders of a particular group (e.g. youth group, Senior's group, young adult group or other) keep that particular group in mind as you work through each exercise. You'll notice where we mention "church" or mention "group" in brackets.

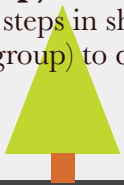


GOALS

This is not meant to be done all in one sitting! It is meant to be done over 12 weeks. Use what works for you.

- Break-up the exercises or questions and get smaller groups of people to work on each one.
- Spend one night of a leadership meeting on each exercise.
- Do the workbook as a small group over the course of 12 weeks.
- Do all 12 exercises as a full weekend retreat. (Pre-work will have to be done by participants if you do it as a retreat.)
- Just pick one exercise out of the workbook and only use it.

The goal of this workbook is to give you clarity on who God has called your church (or group) to show and tell the Gospel to specifically in your context. The second goal is to help you identify first steps in showing and telling the Gospel to the neighbours in your context and equipping people in your church (or group) to do so.



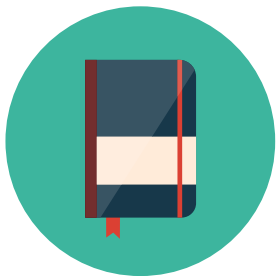
OUTCOMES

By the time you complete this tool you should be able to answer clearly:

- Who are our neighbours?
- What are our neighbours like?
- What would truly be a blessing to our neighbours?
- How are we, as a church, to tangibly show and tell about the Gospel to our neighbours?

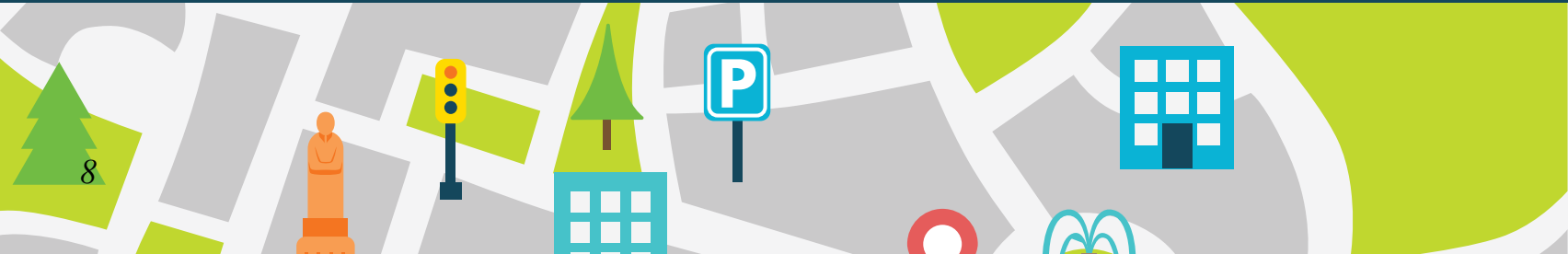
Let us be clear, the outcome we desire is not for you to create another church program! It is for you to begin to understand how you might train the people of your entire congregation (or group) to join God in their neighbourhoods – the places they live, work, study and play every day.





BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

1. According to the Bible, who is your neighbour? You can look at passages such as Mt 22:37-40, Luke 10:25-37, Leviticus 19:18, Romans 15:2.
2. Who does God especially seem to have care and concern for in the Bible? Check out James 1:27, Ps 68:5, Ps 146:9, Ps 82:3, Is 58:7, Dt 14:28-29, Acts 20:35.
3. Has God always been on mission in the world? Why or why not? Add Biblical examples, as you're able.
4. What is the mission God has given Christians? (Mt 28: 18-20)
5. What does it mean to join God's work in our lives?



6. What does it mean to join God's work in our neighbourhoods?
7. What does it mean for us to join God's mission in the world?
8. Does Jesus proclaim the Kingdom of God in both word and deed? Give examples.
9. How has your church historically proclaimed the Gospel? Has it tended to emphasize sharing the Gospel by word or by deed? What is the current emphasis?

For a resource on this see: www.wordeed.ca





PRAYER WALK

Go for a prayer walk together. Each person in the group can stop the group anywhere and point out something they notice (a school, a dangerous road, a senior's home, a spot where people congregate...) and invite the group to pray right there.

When you get back from the prayer walk reflect and write down together

1. What did you see and hear?
2. Did anything surprise you?

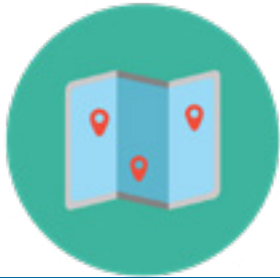


3. What did you not see, that you expected to see? (e.g. We did not see any kids at the playground)

4. Anything you saw that you want to investigate more or pray about more?

5. Did God seem to be highlighting anything in particular or did a theme arise in your prayer walk?





LEARN ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOURS

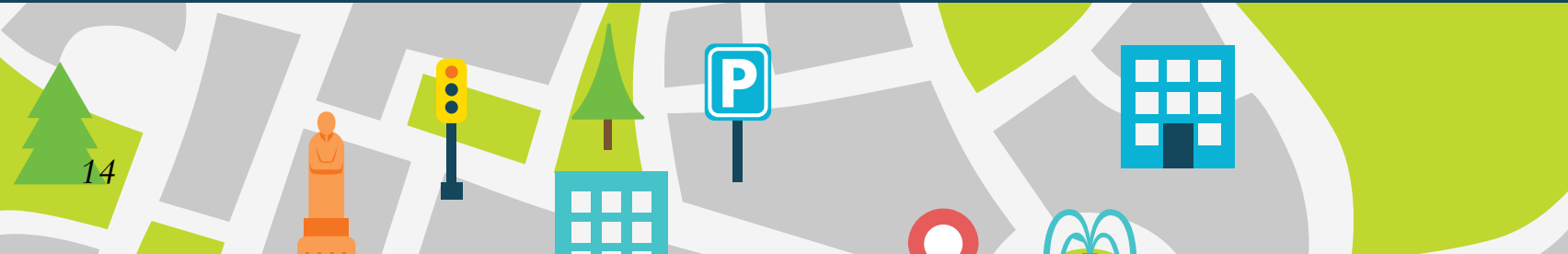
Look up your area on Statistics Canada and answer these questions.
2016 Census results are found here: www12.statcan.gc.ca

1. Generations:

- How many people in each age category live in your area?
- How do these age demographics compare to the age demographics of your church (or group)?

2. Family and marriage:

- How many married or common-law people live in your area?
- How many are single, separated, divorced or widowed in your area?
- How many single parent families are in your area?
- How do these demographics compare to who is included in the core of your church (or group)?



3. Language:

- What different languages are spoken in your area?
- How is this multi-culturalism represented or celebrated in your church (or group)?

4. Poverty:

- How many low income households are in your area?
- What percentage of children/youth in your area are living in a household that is considered low income?

5. Overall: Looking at this census data what discrepancies do you see between your church (or group) demographics and your community demographics?





EXISTING CONNECTIONS

1. What connections do people in your church (or group) already have to the neighbourhoods in your town/city? to the school? to the community centre/hall? to the hospital? to sports teams? to bands? to other “hubs” in your community?

List as many of the connections you know of through your congregation (or group).

2. As you look over the list, do you notice any places where God seems to have given your congregation (or group) multiple connections?

3. Do you notice any significant places in your community where your church (or group) has NO existing connections?

4. Pray God would highlight where and how He wants you to start using these connections in a greater way for His Kingdom.





BRIGHT SPOTS IN THE COMMUNITY

1. What good things and gifts do you see in your wider community (outside of the church)?
2. What can you celebrate?
3. How could you also champion that ideas and support the good initiatives in your community?
4. How could you rally people together to use those strengths/gifts you see in the community for a cause you could all believe? (e.g. #SheMatters, playground for kids in your area, long term housing solutions for low-income families)



5. Do any of the bright spots in your community need more volunteers, resources or help? Is there any way your church (or group) could help them?

6. Is your church (or group) known for supporting other community organizations (with volunteers, financial support, board members, advocacy, or advertising)?

7. What community organization would you like your church (or group) to be known for significantly supporting?





BRIGHT SPOTS IN YOUR CHURCH

1. What strengths/gifts do your church members/adherents (or group) have? In particular try to name the gifts that are unique to your church (or group) and the people God has added to your numbers. Not every church is gifted in the same areas.

2. As you look over the list, does God seem to have disproportionately gifted you in a particular area?

3. Brainstorm as many ideas (even wild ones) of how your church (or group) might use your gifts to bless the community? Notice, we didn't say to bless the church, we said to bless your community outside the walls of your church.





NEEDS

Looking at the Statistics Canada information, listening to the news from your area, and being in the community listening to people – what are needs in your area?

1. List all the needs you see in your area.
2. As you talk to people in your community (outside of the church or your group) what are they saying is their top concern or need for your area?
3. Look back through the existing connections and strengths/gifts that exist in your church (or group). Is there any that line up between these and the needs in your community?



4. Is there any needs that seem to be ignored by the rest of the community or government?

5. Is their one particular need God is calling your church (or group) to address, given your gifts and existing connections? You do not need to respond to every need, but we need to be faithful with the resources and gifts God has entrusted to us! (Remember the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30)





PERSONAL CONNECTIONS WITH NON-CHRISTIANS

1. Invite each person on your leadership team to list, on a piece of paper, the names of the non-Christians they are in regular contact with (at least 5).

Beside each name write the following:

- How often and where do you connect with them?
- What is that person passionate about?
- What are three important things going on in their life right now?
- How could you serve this person in the near future?



2. Is there one of these five non-Christian people you'd feel comfortable asking to interview? They would be participants in the discernment process your church (or group) is undertaking in order to improve loving its neighbours. Pray about it. (You'll be interviewing them later.
3. Try to estimate how many non-Christians the people in your congregation (or group) would have regular contact with in the course of a week.
4. What would it look like to equip the people in your church (or group) to display Christ, in word and deed, to these neighbours they meet?
5. Could you do this same exercise with the people in your congregation (or group)? Where? How?





BLESSING

1. As an individual...

Who is one non-Christian you can bless in some tangible way?
How? Do it.

2. As a group...

Who is one (or a group of) non-Christian(s) you can bless in some tangible way? How? Do it.

3. As a church...

Who is one (or a group of) non-Christian(s) you can bless in some tangible way? How? Do it.

4. Debrief these experiences together.





CONVERSATION WITH A NON-CHRISTIAN

Previously you considered a non-Christian you could ask to interview. Now is your chance to sit down and interview them. Your role here is simply to listen. Do not give answers, do not preach, simply listen without making any judgments. Here are the questions to ask them:

1. What do you think are the biggest issues facing people in our community?
2. If our church (or group) really wanted to help and support our neighbourhood/community what do you think we should do?
3. If our church (or group) was to address one issue in our community, what do you think that one issue should be?

4. At this point – what do you know about our church (or group) and what is your honest impression of it?
5. In your opinion, what reputation do Christians have in our city/town?
6. What do you think churches should be like?
7. Do you consider yourself a spiritual person? Why or why not? How would you define a spiritual person?

Debrief what this experience was like for you with the rest of your small group.





BARRIERS

As your church (or group) prays and makes plans to “join God in our neighbourhoods,” take some time to consider:

1. What information do you still need to gather to do this well?
2. What is your attitude towards your neighbours and joining God there?
3. What scares you?
4. What excites you?
5. What is your church’s current attitude toward your neighbours?
6. What challenges (or objections) will you face within your church (or group)?
7. What challenges will you face in your community?
8. How might you overcome the challenges?
9. What could stop or slow your progress?





DISCERNMENT

Discernment is:

- Listening to God by dwelling in the Word of God
- Listening to one another as we do so
- Listening to God to discover who our neighbors are

Consider the eleven previous exercises, pray together and ask God to highlight a people group, a person, a need in your community, or a strength in your community that He wants your church (or group) to pay special attention to in the season ahead. Remember, you don't need to do it all, start with ONE thing. Build relationships and connections there and see what God does with it.

Use the following “Lectio Divina” as you discern together your area of focus.



“Lectio Divina” is a Latin term, meaning “divine reading” and describes a way of reading the Scriptures whereby we gradually let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us. We desire to hear from God in the present, not for information, but for formation. This is not a Bible Study! There is no need to bring up something you read somewhere else or heard in a sermon. Listen for God’s Word for you today.

The text for this exercise is Luke 10:25-37. Make sure everyone has a copy of the passage in front of them. Before each step invite someone to slowly read the passage out loud to the group (in all you’ll be reading/hearing the passage at least four times.) During each reading you’ll be invited to consider different questions.



Step 1 - *Lectio* (Listen/Read) - Invite everyone to listen for the theme that stands out to them in this passage.

Step 2 - *Meditatio* (Meditate/Reflect) - Invite everyone to listen for one word or phrase that especially touches their heart or catches their attention.

Step 3 *Oratio* (Pray/Respond) - Invite everyone to reflect on how the passage connects with their life and neighbourhood or networks around them. Ask “Where am I in this text?” or “How does this passage make me feel?” Invite each person to turn this reflection step into a silent personal prayer.

Step 4 - *Contemplatio* (Contemplate/Rest) - Invite the group to ask for God’s Word for them today. For example ask: “Is God calling me to any action?” “What personal invitation does Christ have for me to receive and rest in?”³ or “What is God saying to me from this Bible passage?”



Once you have slowly gone through all four steps, ask people to share any thoughts, ideas, or actions they may have heard God whispering to them. Someone should write down themes and words on a white board or flip chart. After everyone has been encouraged to share, ask each other, how we might be hearing from the Spirit speaking to us through the text. You may list several things but you should prioritize and really focus on one or two action steps.

Will you join God in changing Atlantic Canada one neighbourhood at a time?

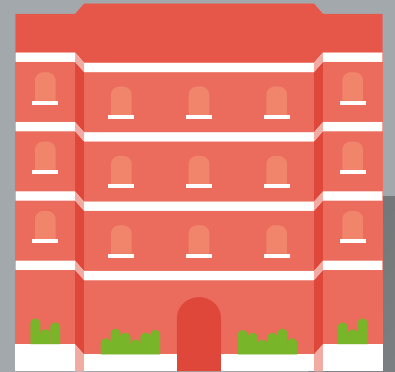
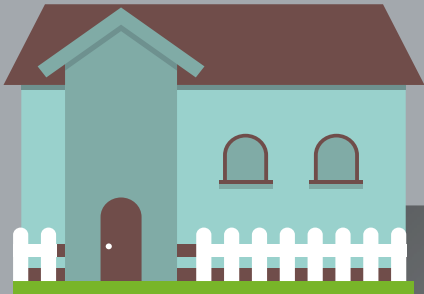
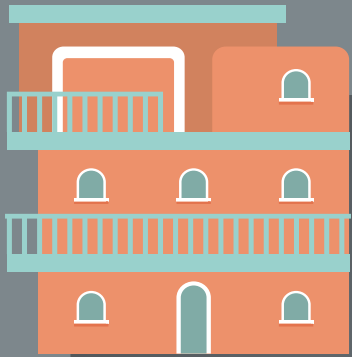


**Share what you
are doing using
#1neighbourhood**



MORE RESOURCES

- *Everyday Church* By Tim Chester
 - *Forgotten Ways* By Alan Hirsch
 - *AND* By Hugh Halter
 - *Flesh* By Hugh Halter
 - *Tangible Kingdom* By Hugh Halter
 - *Saturate* By Jeff Vanderstelt
 - *The Road to Missional* By Michael Frost
 - *The Art of Neighbouring* By Jay Pathak & Dave Runyon
 - *Introducing the Missional Church* By Alan Roxburgh
 - *Neighborhood Mapping* By Dr. John Fuder
 - *The New Parish* By Paul Sparks, Tim Soerens and Dwight J. Friesen
 - *Church 3.0* By Neil Cole
 - *Life on Mission* By Dustin Willis & Aaron Coe
 - *Deep Justice in a Broken World* By Chap Clark & Kara E. Powell
 - *Deep Justice Journeys: 50 Activities to Move from Mission Trips to Missional Living* By Kara E. Powell & Brad M. Griffin
 - *Wordeed* By Canadian Baptist Ministries www.wordeed.ca/
 - *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself* By Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert
- vergenetwork.org
 - somatacoma.org/resources
 - cbacyf.ca/oneneighbourhood
 - Check out cbacyf.ca/naw for more, including the NAW PDF



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