



Thank you, CCDA!

For the past 12+ years, it has been my joy and privilege to serve on the board of the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA), a national family of churches and ministries who serve in vulnerable communities in cities across the United States. Most of these ministries have, at one time or another, been inspired by the life and ministry of John and Vera Mae Perkins, pioneer of several ministries of reconciliation and community development in Jackson, MS and Southern California.

In fact, it was in the 80s that our founding congregation, Grace Fellowship Community Church (GFCC), was befriended by John & Vera Mae, a relationship that deepened over the course of a decade of summer trips to the Harambee Christian Family Center in Pasadena. It was there that we, as a congregation, learned to engage more honestly with the sin of racism, and to have our imagination stirred for how the Church can embody the gospel of reconciliation in our particular urban context.

As I end my service on the governing board, I wish to publically thank John and Vera Mae, CCDA co-founder Wayne Gordon, Executive Director Noel Castellanos, my fellow board members, and the whole of the CCDA community for the witness of gospel faithfulness you all represent. Your lives have been a constant source of strength and encouragement in the work we do in San Francisco. Praise be to God!

- Craig Wong

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Stay in touch with Grace Urban Ministries, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that serves the Church's mission to bear witness to the just and compassionate reign of Christ.

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Healthy Fears...the City's and Mine

- Demitria Gallaread, Grace Fellowship Community Church

I am not a go getter. I am also not a public speaker. But this past year, I have had the opportunity to work with Grace Urban Ministries to develop a presentation on the city's health programs, *Healthy San Francisco* and *SF Health Plan*. To date, I have given two presentations: one here at my church, Grace | Fellowship Community Church, and one at UCSF's Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center at a seminar for African-American leaders about church-based health ministry. At both events I inevitably experienced a turning stomach, a rapidly pounding heart, and an almost humorous anxiety. The feeling of inadequacy was not a dull pain but a jarring throb, and keeping confidence in the message was a constant struggle. But, despite the fear that accompanied me throughout the project, I have miraculously come out on the other side and the journey has, without doubt, enabled me to see God's work in my life.

This project completely took me out of my comfort zone. It opened me up to a world of abilities I had not thought myself capable of, while also developing me as an adult, both inside and outside the walls of my church. Along with my personal growth I have also received the chance to gain a better understanding of how the struggle for healthcare justice fits within the larger mission of the Church. God calls us to seek the shalom of this city. This is not a call to seek the city's economic success, or to gain power and authority within the political realm but, rather, to embrace our human brothers and sisters and to make sure they are cared for.

"Love" is another word that comes to mind, and not a Valentine's Day kind of love, but a love that is synonymous with Jesus Christ. Jesus gave his life and he asks us to likewise, even if it simply means giving away our coat. This can come in the form of time, our knowledge, our money, and our words. It means pursuing the welfare of people in the city, advocating for the health of those who lack adequate resources to address their physical infirmities and, therefore, fear for their lives. Healthcare is only one way that we as a church can practice submitting ourselves to God's heart...by offering the time and tools we've been given, to walk alongside our brothers and sisters... but it is a significant one, and one that continues to call for our attention. +



Renewed People, Renewed Purpose - Lisa Balzer

“As a new member of the GUM Board of Directors, I have been asked to reflect on what I have seen and heard through my participation thus far. I will borrow an illustration from our recent study in the book of Numbers.



In Numbers, Israel is in the wilderness following their God who is on the move. It's a transformative time, a journey from slavery towards becoming the chosen people of God. Early on, the Levites are set apart to carry and take care of the Tabernacle, the center of Israel's worship and life together.

Among the Levites, the Merari clan are given the privilege of carrying the Tabernacle “supports.” It is a ministry of nuts, bolts, and carrying of posts. The Merari provide the framework that supports the Tabernacle and the ministry flowing from it. This obscure clan and its ministry vividly illustrate our GUM Board.

We too, are following our God who is on the move. He is transforming us. We as a congregation have been journeying together, learning to listen and follow Christ. It is a movement away from old, slavish scripts towards a renewed embrace and experience of chosen-ness as sons and daughters in Christ. Our church's recent “season of Jubilee,” that is, a season of congregational, spirit-led confession, forgiveness, and new beginnings, has also brought renewal to the board. Like the “pole carrying” Merari, GUM serves as a supportive arm to the outreach ministries of the church, enabling and building up of the body of Christ, as she serves in various ways in San Francisco. Thus, GUM as a nonprofit entity is being renewed and redefined, like the church, by the Spirit of God.

To enable the work of ministry, GUM seeks to listen and take its cues from what God is doing. Shaped by the Word proclaimed, stimulated by stories of His faithfulness, we show up at our appointed places, for example, from Mission High School to City Hall, from *Kaleo* to *GEMs* to *Urban Adventures*. There we are met by Him. In these places God is making Himself known. It is in these shared stories, that we are learning to listen together to have His mind, His purpose, and His will.

As a board we are learning to trust that God will speak His word to us and through us. Craig Wong's recent departure from the governing board of the CCDA gave us opportunity to rethink our local ministry priorities. So, we took time to revisit his, as well as Pam Chao's, roles and time allocations. Ordinarily, this might have been a somewhat dry and perfunctory task, but through listening, prayer and conversation, we, along with Craig and Pam, all received a rejuvenated sense of purpose! God meets us in life's details, so trusting Him to speak into even the everyday stuff of where one spends his or her time and energies can bring a renewed sense of direction and purpose. This new life is God's doing. Thanks be to God! †

UPDATE

Health Fair Ministry: Exploring New Forms

This year, it is the collective wisdom of the pastors to not have a Mission Street Health Fair but, instead, to consider smaller, more localized expressions of congregation-based health ministry. Additionally, the Fair's host congregation the past three years, SF Christian Center, will be focused on a major season of transition with the retirement of Bishop Don Green and the installation of Rev. Roderick Gittens as the head pastor. So, in Daly City, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, led by Pastor Sonny Wan, will be hosting a local “Diabetes Day” health event on October 30th, with assistance from GUM and other partner organizations and congregations. Please pray for these transitions and new beginnings!