



## A Journey to the Common Good

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Do you ever have a year that has a recurring "theme"? You keep running into words, places, situations, people, etc. that create new paths, new insights, and those great Spirit-filled "aha" moments?

A couple years ago I was sent to Albuquerque, New Mexico, (one of my home towns!) to attend one of the Episcopal Church's "Called to Transformation" trainings being held all over the country ([www.calledtotransformation.org](http://www.calledtotransformation.org)). This training is based on 1 Corinthians 12 that "each of us is given different gifts to serve the community and that we are all a part of the body of Christ working together."

Created and facilitated by Episcopal Relief & Development, and based on the community organizing method they use in their work around the world called Asset Based Community Development, this training is developing facilitators who go back to their churches and help folks realize their own gifts for ministry, who then go out into the community and continue a practice to help others realize their gifts so that people, neighborhoods, cities, regions (and maybe even countries?) can work together for the good of all.

Walter Brueggemann, a renowned theologian and Old Testament scholar, wrote a book in 2010 that says "the great crisis among us is the crisis of 'the common good,' the sense of community solidarity that binds all in a common destiny" and that God dreams and wills for us to journey together toward the common good.

Last Fall I got to serve as deacon for Michael Curry at the last Revival service in Bakersfield, and yes, the Spirit-sparks fly wherever he is! This was where he preached "it's not political, it's Biblical!" A reminder that we are ALL part of the body of Christ and we must call out and act whenever and wherever there are activities that separate people.

The saying "it's about who you know" has taken on new meaning for me. Usually that phrase is used when someone is "climbing the corporate ladder" or has been able to "get in" to somewhere. How about using "it's who you know" to pull people together - these are the kind of community organizing techniques that many faith-based action groups use, and I've even seen this in my daily work, watching events grow beyond expectations because of communications with a wide-ranging network that somehow is all linked!

I even had an interaction this week with Jesus' Greatest Commandments - Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself. Consider the order of these words - God, Neighbor, Yourself.

We are all called to work for the common good, and this message pops up everywhere!