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SWK 661: Social Work in Congregations and Faith-Based Organizations

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Reaction Paper #1

John Ashmen the president and CEO of CityGate Network blessed us with an amazing presentation regarding his faith based organization that is based in the Colorado area. He explained how this organization has foundation and beliefs that are categorized as a faith based organization. CityGate Network's mission statement is *"to provide the vision, education, training, resources, guidance, representation, and nexus for missions and kindred ministries that are moving people in destitute conditions or desperate situations from human suffering to human flourishing through the process of gospel powered life transformation"*. I found it very impact that this organization's focuses on promoting life transformation resources rather than just providing a resource that helps an individual or family in the moment. "Service-missions not only is, but also should be framed as worship, as Christian education, and as a way to build community with one another" (Garland & Yancey, 2014).

Just as Matthew 6:10, John Ashmen in 2018 brought about the creation of the 8 S's which included *"saved: making choices that will keep them from chronic illness and physical death; sober; no longer controlled by stimulates or depressants; Stable: mentally and emotionally balanced and enjoying good health; school: bring academically credentialed and set on a career path; secure: benefiting from having the same safe place of their own to stay every night; serving: giving back to the community through missional living"*. All 8 categories are intended to help an individual or family reach a successful and life transformation life that will lead them to a successful, healthy and worthy life. CityGate breaks down four ways

compassionate people attempt to move individuals in need from human suffering to human flourishing which consist of humanitarian aid, disaster relief, community development and life transformation. Perceiving through the struggles.

The Rescue Mission target those facing poverty and homelessness, and became a voice to those who were “down and out”. As many know the homeless population is a community that is underserved, through this organization the purpose was to assist them through and out of their situation and not just a minute of fulfillment. An example he used which was interesting, it was something I never put much through into, he stated “Church goes down to the park with pizza with a group of youth from the church to feed the homeless people and when they return to the youth center they are often asked what did you learn, meaning it was an experience for the youth and the homeless people are still left at the park waiting for the next church to come and bring them another hot meal”. Realistically speaking this is what happens many times when we as a church or congregation encounter homeless people, although it is with good intentions it doesn’t change the outcome that homeless individuals will remain in the street without guarantee when the next meal will be.

Overall the presentation was powerful in understanding that local congregations throughout the nation are play a role in being active community changers. CityGate Network was an organization I never heard of but after listening to the presentation it is a resource that can be added for future support. “Missions refers to all the ways that Christians and their congregations address the needs of neighbors wherever those needs exist as a way of responding to God’s calling, whether the focus is individuals families, neighborhoods, social systems or society” (Garland & Yancey, 2014). John mentioned Matthew 25:35-36 which was the same verse that was connected to my Intervention of the Faithful presentation. John mentioned that the churches

or faith based organizations should base their values and practice with this verse because it symbolizes that no matter where we are or what the need is, God will always be there and just as he is there for us we should be there for our brothers and sisters.