

Growing up in a small town I learned, at a young age, the joy of the connectiveness of the small town. For example, the impact of farming on everyone in the community. My dad worked at and eventually owned a Chrysler/Plymouth/Dodge/Jeep dealership in which he was the only salesperson. If the farmers did well, my dad sold trucks, if they did not, well, sales generally reflected that. But not just with car dealers, but the whole economy of the town is affected as well: schools, churches, retail, etc. As a small town, we are all family and thus when one part is affected, other parts feel it. I missed this aspect of community when we lived in the Pacific Northwest for five years. That part of the country definitely has its advantages, and we enjoyed living out west, but growing up in a small farming community is something and always will be something that is in my blood. It is the connectiveness that is a strength as Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "A threefold cord is not quickly broken."

The same can be said about the church as well. I grew up in a smallish-type church in a small town. I also worked in a mega-church in a northern suburb of Minneapolis/St. Paul. In that large church, I missed the smallness of my hometown roots as church-wide connectiveness is difficult, if not impossible, in a 3,000-member congregation. I did have my small group there, but it was still not the same.

It is easy to look at other churches and compare, saying they must be more successful because they have more people, or they have this and that program. It is also easy to compare Buffalo Center with other communities. Sometimes I drive through other towns and wonder what it would be like to have this or that resource locally, or this or that look of a park, etc. But then I remind myself that a community is not about infrastructure and stuff. It is the people, and I would never trade the people here for a piece of infrastructure. And the church, well, the church is not a building but rather the people. We are a small group in a small town. We are connected and thus we are family.

Yes, there are things that other churches do that we do not do and that is fine. They are them and we are us. And you know something, we "do us" better than anyone else and we do it well. And they "do them" better than anyone else and they do it well. That is the joy and strength of the small church and community. But "us" and "them"? Collectively we are ALL "us" in the name of Jesus, and thus collectively, even though we are small, yet we are very strong. For that I give God praise and glory, and for that I am at peace. I hope you are too.