

Reader 1:

Once upon a time, three churches decided to address an unusual—and dire—problem permeating their city. Somehow, the streets and sidewalks on the east side of this town had fallen prey to alarming cracks that crisscrossed the entire town. These cracks were two to four inches wide and several feet long, making the roads dangerous and virtually un-drivable. No one knew the exact cause of the cracks, yet residents felt trapped in their homes and ventured to work, school, and church only when necessary.

In an effort to fix the town's problem, the first church surveyed the damage and came up with a Quick-And-Easy Physical Solution. Their plan was to use a thin layer of topcoat to cover the cracks and render the roads drivable and the sidewalks walkable. Residents stood and watched as the church members poured out of their cars, mixed up the topcoat, and spread it across the cracks like a layer of chocolate icing on a cake. Pleased with the quick repair, the town folk hugged the church members and cheered as the church drove away.

The topcoat worked...for a few weeks.

But the weight of the cars, the heat of the sun, and the pounding of the rain soon eroded the topcoat. The cracks reappeared, and residents retreated again to their homes. Some thought the cracks were not as severe as they'd been before the topcoat, but no one could be sure.

Reader 2:

The second church, after examining the town's broken roads, adopted a different strategy. Recognizing that there was a lot they didn't know, the church members figured they'd better learn more about their town's needs and neighbors before making things right. They divided up into teams, some interviewing the residents and others visiting home improvement stores to learn about the type of cement that would best address the problem.

The neighbors had ideas for road repairs that the church never would have thought of. As a result, the church was able to develop a Warm-and-Fuzzy Friendly Solution in which the church and the neighbors worked side by side filling in the cracks with a customized cement.

The cement worked. For six whole months. But then, to the church's dismay, a new series of cracks began to crisscross the roads. Their new friends told them that even though the Warm-and-Fuzzy Friendly Solution had fixed the old cracks, an entirely new set of cracks had emerged, making the roads almost as hazardous.

Reader 3:

The third church, having heard about the first two well-intentioned-but-failed strategies, knew that neither topcoat nor a brand new cement would make things right. Like those in the second church, they spent several days interviewing neighbors and hearing stories and dreams about crack-free driving as well as the pain and fear caused by the unsafe conditions. Wanting to avoid the mistakes of the first two churches, the third church adopted a more radical repair strategy.

The church decided to divide into two teams. The first team was tasked with repairing the current cracks. Recognizing that the very foundation of the city's roads was not right, the team members worked with their new friends to jackhammer large sections of road, dig up the resulting rubble, re-level the foundations, and then lay a brand new asphalt surface for the roads.

In order to prevent the cracks from reappearing, the second team investigated a few deeper and more complex questions. First, the team looked into why the faulty roads had been built in the first place, and lobbied at City Hall to change the construction code so defective roads would never be built again. Second, they asked the neighbors why they'd been unable to fix the roads, and raised funds to provide the training in construction and asphalt-laying that their neighbors would need to keep the roads shipshape in the future.

This Deep Solution did the trick. Thanks to the new, stable foundation and the neighbors' new training, the broken roads were fixed—for good.