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# The Resource Page

... creative and practical ideas

Brought to you this month  
by Kathy Pickett



## Mapping your congregation's missional journey

Most churches know they have been called to a journey, but don't know where they are going. To encourage congregations to begin planning for their missional journeys, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has created *Destinations: Mapping Your Congregation's Missional Journey, A Resource for Church Planning*.

This resource is "... to be used in ... planning every aspect of your congregation's life together, including fellowship, teaching, proclamation, service and worship."

For too long the church has thought of being missional as doing missions. Although missions is an important part of being missional, it is not the only element.

"The term missional essentially defines the sending nature of God: God sent Jesus, Jesus sent the Spirit, and the Spirit sends the Church into the world. A missional church then is a church that embraces its sent-ness and seeks to be the presence of Christ in the world. A missional church worships, prays, and ministers believing that God is actively reconciling and redeeming the world through Christ, and as if God's mission includes the local church in both its global and local expressions. Far beyond a missions ministry or program, everything a missional church does expresses this belief. Said another way, participation in the mission of God in the world is the end of all that a missional church does." (*Destinations*, p. 16)

As the body of Christ, being sent to be the presence of Christ in the world, it makes sense that we would intentionally work to discern and plan where we are going as the "body of Christ."

After our congregation participated in the *It's Time* program, we found ourselves asking, "What now? Where are we headed with our newfound knowledge and spiritual growth?"

We needed a mapping tool to help us plan an intentional missional journey.

Knowing that each congregation and staff is unique, *Destinations* is designed to be a guide — not a prescriptive — for church planning. Each step offers suggestions on how to begin charting your unique course as well as offering questions to prompt missional thinking. For example: "Describe the community where your church is located. What are the needs of the community around your church? What are the strengths and/or gifts of your church? What potential destinations emerge as your church considers these questions?" The questions are helpful prompts for thinking, reviewing and dreaming about your congregation's unique journey.

A missionally minded congregation should look at every aspect of a functioning church and ask, "Does this represent what God is calling us to do in this time and place?" Worship, the budget, stewardship, programming, ministry of all age groups and missions should represent what your church identifies as God's directional map for your journey. Within your church plan there should be opportunities for individuals to learn what it means to be missionally minded in their own neighborhoods, schools and workplaces.

This summer the staff at my church decided we needed to begin the process of mapping out our congregational journey. Using the *Destinations* resource we spent two days answering questions, dreaming, reviewing and discovering where we are doing a great job of being missional and where there is room for

improvement. Although we have always done yearly planning, we have not worked through each area of church ministry asking the questions, "Are we being intentionally missional in this area of ministry? Is this program still relevant to the 21st century culture?"

After working through our yearly calendar using the *Destinations* resource as our guide, we recognized areas where certain age groups were not included, ongoing programs needed refreshing and places where we needed something new. We were assured that we are doing many things well, but need a directional map to take us to the next level.

*Destinations* is designed so that pastors, ministry staff, leadership teams and church leaders can easily use the resource. Along with guiding steps and prompting questions, the resource also includes a "packing list" of suggested resources to support your "travel itinerary," ideas and "possible options" to implement your itinerary, and a monthly calendar to help guide the journey.

Included is a suggestion to host a "Bon Voyage" party with your church to celebrate and share the new year's destination. It will be important to encourage your entire congregation to "get on board" since a missional church begins with missional individuals.

Does your church know where it's headed? Do you hear folks saying things like, "We do a lot of good things, but they don't seem to be going anywhere"? Have you taken the time to map out your congregational journey a year at a time? Doesn't it make sense to intentionally take time to discover where God is calling and sending your congregation?

Like any trip, "some of your plans will change, and others won't turn out as expected. Trust in the Spirit's leadership, embrace the surprises, and recognize that this is all part of the journey." **BT**

*It's Time: A Journey Toward Missional Faithfulness* and other resources:  
CBF Store, (888) 801-4223  
[www.thefellowship.info](http://www.thefellowship.info)

**THE RESOURCE PAGE** is provided by the Congregational Life office of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in partnership with *Baptists Today* and for those dedicated lay leaders working in the educational ministries of local churches. This month's page was written by Kathy Pickett, associate pastor for youth and missions at Holmeswood Baptist Church in Kansas City, Mo. **Resource Page Archives are now available at [http://www.thefellowship.info/resources/for\\_your\\_church/baptists\\_today.icm](http://www.thefellowship.info/resources/for_your_church/baptists_today.icm).**