

The Missional Journey

Being the Presence of Christ



**The CBF
Missional Church
Initiative**

CBF Leadership Team

Daniel Vestal

Executive Coordinator

Bo Prosser

Coordinator of Congregational Formation

Production Team

Rick Bennett

Director of Congregational Formation

Kristopher Norris

Project Manager

© 2010 Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

All rights reserved, no part of this material may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, © 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

2930 Flowers Road South

Suite 133

Atlanta, GA 30341

www.thefellowship.info

770.220.1600

Contents

Welcome from Daniel Vestal	4
How to Use this Resource	5
Introduction	6
Being Church in a New World	8
The Biblical Basis of Missional Church	13
The Marks of a Missional Journey	17
Implications for Congregational Renewal	21
The Challenge and Hope of Missional Living	25
Endnotes	26
Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms	27
Appendix 2: Missional Bibliography	30

Welcome from Daniel Vestal

Friends,

Welcome to the Missional Journey!

I grew up in a Christian culture where the Gospel was primarily about getting to Heaven when you die. It centered on life after death, and its focus was primarily on individuals. There is much about my heritage that I value, and I very much believe in the eternal and the personal. But I have come to believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has much more to offer us.

The Gospel is about God. It is about God's glory, grace, and goodness. It is about God's great mission to redeem, restore, and renew all of creation, including individuals, through Jesus Christ. The Gospel is about God's present and coming Kingdom, incarnate in Christ, which can then become incarnate in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is about nothing less than the "Missio Dei;" that is, the mission of God.

Let me welcome you to a journey of discovery and participation in this mission. As you explore this little pamphlet on *Becoming the Presence of Christ*, I invite you to search the Scripture and search your own heart as to what it means to be a continuing incarnation of Christ in this world. I encourage you to pray earnestly, listen intently, and love passionately. In community, learn from others who have walked this journey before you.

And do not be afraid, because the resurrected Christ is among us and within us, as well as ahead of us!

Daniel Vestal
Executive Coordinator
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Atlanta, Georgia

How to Use this Resource

The Missional Journey: Being the Presence of Christ is a resource for promoting missional awareness and formation within your church. To that end, consider using *The Missional Journey* in the following ways:

Bible Study and Small Group Communities—Use *The Missional Journey* as Sunday school or small-group material, introducing and dialoguing the meaning of missional journey. Consider using this resource in conjunction with the missional resource, *Glimpses of Missional Faithfulness*.

Wednesday Night Study—Use *The Missional Journey* as a way of engaging what it means to be missional during your weekly Wednesday night studies. Use the stories of congregations and discussion questions in the “Marks of a Missional Journey” section to encourage dialogue. Again, consider using this resource in conjunction with *Glimpses of Missional Faithfulness*. During your Wednesday evening prayer time, pray for continued missional faithfulness.

Planning Teams and Committee—Offer *The Missional Journey* to your various planning teams and committees as a group study experience wherein brainstorming and discernment might take place for future ministries. This experience will help the team understand the missional nature of their work and encourage them to develop and share their own story. Consider *The Missional Journey* when the need arises to help your church’s missions committee distinguish between missions and missional.

Leadership Retreat—Build a missional leadership retreat experience around *The Missional Journey*. Explore the material in this resource together over the course of the weekend interspersed with periods of prayer and reflection in an effort to teach and apply missional concepts. This retreat is a good time to introduce the *It’s Time: a Journey Toward Missional Faithfulness* resource to your leadership and ask for their support.

Prelude to the It’s Time Experience—For churches preparing to do *It’s Time*, consider using *The Missional Journey* with your steering team as a way of preparing them for the experience. *The Missional Journey* will help steering team members better grasp missional and equip them for engaging church members around the term and concept.

Please do not limit yourself to the above ideas. Be creative with this resource. Think in new and innovative ways, and share your experience at formation@thefellowship.info.

Introduction

Their journey began with a visioning process and ended with the transformation of extra building space into a Hispanic church start, a preschool, an urban studies seminary, and housing for ministry teams. Pastor Tony Lankford says that Park Avenue Baptist Church in Atlanta identified the needs of its community and realized it had the extra facility space to meet those needs. A small congregation in a large facility, Park Avenue renovated space to create these four missional ministries, and hopes to do even more. Lankford says the transformation started with a renewed commitment to be the presence of Christ in its neighborhood which then led to the congregation rediscovering the spiritual discipline of hospitality and taking initiative in community ministry. “We saw we have the ability and resources in place to fulfill this need,” says Lankford. “This is our way of being part of God’s kingdom. We are not a large congregation, but this was something we could do.”

For more information, see the story of Park Avenue Baptist Church in Glimpses of Missional Faithfulness, p. 47.

This story is one example of the ways North American churches are meeting the challenges facing them today. A growing number of churches are engaging a missional journey. Like Park

These visionary congregations see these new circumstances as a time of unprecedented opportunity, and act with imagination and faith to make the most of the moment.

Avenue, they accept that a new day has come and realize that changes in culture have major implications for congregational life. Affirming their past without clinging to it, they are finding fruitful ways to adapt to the challenges of our day and time. Inspired by a profoundly biblical understanding of God’s mission and tuned into the particular ways God’s Spirit acts in their unique contexts, these churches take large and small steps to align themselves with the larger mission of God. These visionary congregations see these new circumstances as

a time of unprecedented opportunity, and act with imagination and faith to make the most of the moment.

Many churches ask, “What do we want to be, become, and do to respond to our denominational program or the historical beliefs and principles of our tradition?” Churches on the missional journey, however, ask, “What is God wanting us to be, become, and do to continue the ministry of Christ within our present community and around the world?” Being missional is more than a question of programs, traditions, or organization; this issue is one of identity—of being the Body and the presence of Christ.

Being Church in a New World

Things aren't what they used to be! This is true in every area of North American society, and it's certainly true for the Church. Peter Drucker describes the contemporary situation in *Post Capitalist Society*:

*Every few hundred years in Western history there occurs a sharp transformation. Within a few short decades, society rearranges itself—its world view; its basic values; its social and political structure; its arts; its key institutions. Fifty years later, there is a new world. And people born then cannot even imagine the world in which their grandparents lived and into which their own parents were born. We are currently living through just such a transformation.*¹

Consider three interrelated areas where these transformations are occurring:

- changes in culture
- changes in church
- changes in congregational life

Changes in culture. The last decades of the twentieth century brought an unprecedented level of change. The result is a new cultural reality. Developments in such areas as transportation, telecommunications, television, and computer technology shrank the world and made information instantly available from anywhere around the globe. These developments brought about a fundamental shift from the Industrial Age to the Information Age — from a society that prizes large size, power, and productivity to a society that prizes knowledge, connectivity and community. This information-driven, global society made pluralism a fact of life, introducing people to an almost endless array of languages, races, customs, lifestyles, and beliefs.

This increase in technology, however, also decreased our dependence on each other. Because of communication and Internet advances, we have the capabilities to do most things we need in isolation. In a society that glorifies competition, individuals see each other as competitors rather than partners. With the triumph of individualism and commercialism in modern Western cul-

ture, advances in technology and the rise in globalism do not always bind us together in a larger sense of community. In this new age, personal choice is king, and our differences are as likely to isolate us from one another as to connect us. Personal preference and satisfaction dictate the choices we make and the relationships we form. This increasing social isolation creates a yearning for community among people who resonate with a more post-modern culture. These changes in culture made great impacts on the church.

Changes in church. One of the first to identify the changing culture and issue a call to action in the church was Loren Mead. In his book, *The Once and Future Church*, Mead pointed out how the “age of Christendom,” with its privileged place for the church, has given way to a new time of Post-Christendom. Note these contrasts between then and now:

Christendom vs. Post-Christendom²
1. Unity of church, state, and society vs. Church marginalized by state and society
2. Need for uniformity vs. Diversity of beliefs
3. Mission: far off enterprise vs. Mission: at our door
4. Laity: obey rules, maintain order vs. Laity: do mission and ministry

The result is that churches no longer have a privileged position within the community. No longer can churches thrive simply because they are “program-based” or “denominationally-branded.” Culture no longer stands in the background cheering churches on as they do their work. In fact, churches today seem unsure about how to encourage themselves. Having previously measured success numerically, many congregations are unsure how to confirm their faithfulness. Today, congregational esteem is best nurtured by congregations that show signs of being willing to journey missionally. When a congregation takes steps to be found faithful by doing what God leads it to do, it feels the most positive about itself. Esteem is built by faithfulness.

Kennon Callahan describes the shift in our conception of church from “churched cultured” local churches to the local church as mission outpost.³ Churches exist as mission outposts in alien territory, and as Christians we become resident aliens in a foreign culture (1 Peter 2:11). In contrast to our pervading culture of commercialism, consumerism, isolation, and contention, our lives in community proclaim that another way is possible. By modeling the practices of

Jesus—that is, showing signs of unconditional grace and forgiveness, peace and love with others, inclusion of the marginalized and outcast, treatment of everyone as equally created in the image of God, healing and comfort to those in pain, and sharing with those in need—we embody the calling to be the Body of Christ in the world (1 Cor. 12:27, Eph. 4). In a society that demands cultural relevance, the church exists as an alternative community, offering a glimpse of the Kingdom of God through its life together.

The church exists as an alternative community, offering a glimpse of the Kingdom of God through its life together.

Changes in congregational life. Over the past 30 years dramatic changes occurred in congregational life, especially in worship, fellowship, scriptural literacy, and mission. Churches on the missional journey recognize these changes and appropriately respond.

Some note that church members are more demanding of their own needs to be met because there are many religious options from which they can choose. This results in a greater variety of worship “options,” as some congregations move to a more contemporary expression of worship, while some return to a more liturgical expression. Many ministers note a shift toward a casual worship atmosphere, even in “high” liturgy churches. Generational divides and competing visions of worship make unity more difficult.

Congregations must overcome the divisive influences of individualism and tribalism prevalent in culture. Ethnic, gender, economic, political, and theological differences impose thick barriers to true fellowship within churches. Building true and authentic community also becomes difficult as more congregational members “commute” to church rather than live in the immediate community.

Many ministers note a distinct decrease in biblical literacy among members in congregations, resulting in the loss of a unifying narrative among congregations. Instead of being formed together by the biblical witness, many churches seem to have lost a sense of value in the stories and biblical narratives that help to shape identity.

All these, and many other changes, make clarity of mission more of an imperative. Many congregations have responded to these changes by focusing on multi-ethnic memberships, while many more incorporate women into leadership roles. The increased busyness and isolation of our culture has inspired an emphasis on intimate community within the church, as people long for authentic relationships. As people become more aware of the needs of others across the globe and in their communities, they hear and heed issues of social justice more broadly today in both theologically moderate and conservative churches. Mission becomes more than supporting an annual

offering effort or program and becomes an issue of engaging a particular project or social issue. Budget constraints and difficult economic times force churches to become more creative in how they deliver ministries and engage in missions.

As the church, we face the challenge of responding to our communities through new approaches to ministry if we hope to remain faithful. George Barna notes in *The Second Coming of the Church*:

The vast majority of Christians do not behave differently because they do not think differently, and they do not think differently because we have never trained them, equipped them, or held them accountable to do so . . . Although the times have changed, most churches have not. We often confuse structure and methods with theology and message. As a result, literally tens of thousands of churches are woefully out of sync with the people they most want to seek, save, serve, and send.⁴

We can no longer do church the way we have always done church. We must answer the call to be the church, to be “missional” by living with strategic purpose and imaginative love. Living missionally as a community is a process of enculturation, conforming every practice of the church to God’s vision while immersing ourselves into this new way of life as the distinct community of God. Now more than ever, the world needs us to be the Body and presence of Christ!

We must answer the call to be the church, to be “missional” by living with strategic purpose and imaginative love.

How have you experienced these cultural changes? What are the implications of these changes for your church?

“The missional journey is not a six-week study,” claims Barry Bridges, pastor of Common Ground Church in San Antonio, Texas. “It is a lifestyle.” Bridges founded Common Ground on a “redesigned” model of church, emphasizing spiritual relationships rather than numbers as the key to success. Understanding the transitions in culture, Common Ground seeks to reach people in the community in new and imaginative ways, such as their Last Saturdays art gallery. Each month, local artists are invited to open a display at a local restaurant or coffee-shop. After viewing the gallery, church members and people from the community gather to discuss the art and engage in meaningful conversation. Barry states that this avenue for conversation has become a great way for the church to cultivate relationships and communicate the gospel.

For more information, see the story of Common Ground Church in Glimpses of Missional Faithfulness, p. 15.

The Biblical Basis of Missional Church

The starting point for churches and Christians who want to reclaim the power of the gospel for our time and place is to discover a deeply biblical sense of what it means to be missional. The missional message of scripture frees us from time-bound structures and methods and reconnects us to the enduring mission of God. We gain a solid foundation for effective ministry that is in rhythm with God *and* those we want to seek, save, serve, and send in the here and now.

Guiding Missional Statements

1. God is on mission creating, renewing, reconciling, and restoring a broken and fallen world. God initiates and sustains this mission and calls all of humanity to participate with Him in this mission.
2. The mission of God is most clearly expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As Christians and churches, we find new identity in Jesus Christ to such an extent that every decision of life, every action, and every motivation emerges from this identity.
3. The Holy Spirit directs the mission of God so that the world is transformed into the kingdom of God. As Christians and churches, we work by the power of the Holy Spirit to invite persons into relationship with Jesus Christ and to create a just world where all of creation is reconciled to Christ.
4. The church serves the mission of God. As Christians and churches, we seek to reflect the kingdom of God in our ministries, our actions, our thoughts and our motivations.
5. The mission of God will be fulfilled when all of creation lives together in peace, justice, and right relationship with God. As Christians and churches, we live in faith as if this future is happening on earth as it is in heaven.

A biblical understanding of missional begins with an appreciation for God as a missional God. In the work of creation, God formed an unfinished world and human beings as partners in its full development (Gen. 1:26-31). After the fall (Gen. 3), God carried on the work of redemption, ultimately sending Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit for the redemption of the world (John 3:16-17; II Cor. 5:19). Now, God continues the work of redemption toward its completion in the fullness of God's love (Rev. 21-22).

Central to this missional story line is God's sending, embodied through the witness and ministry of the church. God the Father sends the Son (John. 6:35-40); the Father and the Son send the Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15); and the Triune God, in turn, sends us into the world. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John. 20:21 *RSV*). God created us to respond to and participate in the inner life and relationships of the Trinity through spiritual formation and contemplative action. Made for relationship, we participate in the mission of God through the community of the church. The church, in the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8), is called to take up God's mission as the ongoing instrument of God's redeeming work.

Through God's redemptive call, mission is not just one segment of the church's program. For churches on the missional journey, God's mission is the sum total of the church's reason for being. As Emil Brunner put it, "The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning." The essential missional character of the church comes through in the apostle Paul's depiction of the church as "the body of Christ" (Rom. 12:4-5; I Cor. 12:4-31; Eph. 4:7-16). Using this metaphor, Paul portrays the church as the ongoing embodiment of Christ's life and mission in the world. Animated by the Spirit and directed by Christ, who is our Head, we have been called out by God to represent the Kingdom of God through transformed lives, the radical distinctiveness of life together, and the power of service and witness in the world (Acts 2:42-47).

Paul goes so far as to say that when we are in Christ, creation is made new—the world experiences transformation through our mission (II Cor. 5:17-21). As the Body of Christ, we are therefore the presence of Christ in the world, participating in God's mission of reconciliation and redemption as ambassadors for Christ. The essence of the missional journey is being the presence of Christ to and in the world by witness-

The church, in the power of the Spirit, is called to take up God's mission as the ongoing instrument of God's redeeming work.

For churches on the missional journey, God's mission is the sum total of the church's reason for being.

ing to this new creation and new way of life made possible by Christ.

An inherent tension exists in our relationship with culture. We carry on our life in contrast to the values and patterns of culture (I Pet. 2:1-12; Rom. 12:1-2). However, we also adapt to and participate constructively in the cultures where we find ourselves. We do this not to be seen as culturally relevant, but for love of God and the world God loves. We do it so that the timeless gospel can have a timely appeal (I Cor. 9:19-23).

Our missional calling in Christ takes shape both communally and individually. As the Body of Christ, we collaborate with one another in one great, common cause (I Cor. 12:4-27), while we each have distinctive gifts and callings to serve as representatives of Christ and the church wherever we are (Eph. 2:8-10). These unique gifts combine to make us into one Body with many diverse parts. Therefore, the church bears responsibility to form and equip followers of Christ for active and informed participation in the ministries of the church for the blessing of the world (Eph. 4:11-12; Col. 3:23).

The church, by its very nature, does not simply “do” missions; it is missional. The church arises out of God’s mission and exists to continue God’s work of reconciliation, healing, and ultimate fulfillment of creation. Churches on the missional journey discern, announce, and participate in God’s on-going mission of creation, redemption, reconciliation, and renewal. The missional journey is the process of growing more and deeper into God’s will and redeeming work. Churches and individual Christians, at one and the same time, serve as instruments, agents, and signs of the existing and emerging Kingdom of God.

The essence of the missional journey is being the presence of Christ.

How is God calling my church to be the presence of Christ?

Several years ago, Winter Park Baptist Church in Wilmington, North Carolina transformed their baptismal practice into a commissioning for ministry. After the baptism, the pastor sprinkles salt in the candidates' hands and invites them to taste it. "You are the salt of the earth," they are reminded. "Allow your life to bring zest and flavor to the lives of others." Family members or friends then light a candle for the candidate, who is reminded of Jesus' words about being "the light of the world." They are told, "Let your light shine before others so that they see your good works, and give glory to your Father in heaven." These missional admonishments help members to understand themselves as ministers and engage their own mission passions. One such missional passion has become "the Brown House," a house on the church property that Winter Park transformed into a place for college and community ministry. Through this house the church reaches out to 30-50 people a week from all walks of life who enjoy food and conversation in the Brown House.

For more information, see the story of Winter Park in Glimpses of Missional Faithfulness, p. 11.

The Marks of a Missional Journey

What characteristics might churches on the missional journey share? Reflections on the life of the earliest Christian churches suggest:

Dependence on the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit. Scripture describes the earliest followers of Jesus as “devoted” to prayer (Acts 2:42). They witnessed the awesome power of God at Pentecost, and through the power of the Holy Spirit were able to face life together. Like the early church, churches pray as an expression of intimacy with God, dependence upon God, and trust in God. Through prayer, they discern the work of the Holy Spirit in their midst and how they can best participate in God’s redemptive efforts. Through prayer, they tap into the power of God. While our culture tells us to value independence and self-reliance, as missional communities, we place our dependence on God, and through God’s church, in times of transition, struggle, joy, and discernment.

What place does prayer have in the corporate life of your church and in the personal lives of members?

Engagement in spiritual formation and disciple-making. The earliest churches took seriously Jesus’ command to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20 NIV). Churches on the missional journey develop an intentional process of disciple-making that produces disciples who, in turn, make disciples (II Tim. 2:2). Discipline lies at the heart of what it means to make and be disciples. The earliest Christian communities shared disciplines that opened their hearts to God (Acts 2:42). These disciplines enabled them to reflect the life of Christ authentically and convincingly. In the same way, churches on the missional

journey nurture the spiritual lives of their members through disciplines of spiritual formation. They gauge their success in terms of life transformation (Rom. 12:1-2).

What evidence of spiritual transformation do you see in the lives of members and others served by the ministries of your church? Through what practices does your church help believers mature as disciples?

The embrace of a biblical worldview and a Kingdom vision. Just as the early Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42), so missional churches emphasize the study of scripture in community as a catalyst for life change and growth. Recognizing the alluring nature of contemporary culture, these churches allow the Bible to inform an alternate worldview and lifestyle. The story of scripture forms these communities into alternative societies that embody the vision of God’s Kingdom (Matt. 5-7) and commit to serve it over worldly powers (Phil. 3:20-21). This worldview forms their identity as God’s people called to witness to God’s truth and serve those in need.

The story of scripture forms these communities into alternative societies that embody the vision of God’s Kingdom.

How does your church’s study of scripture shape its identity and practice?

Thinking and acting locally and globally with the least evangelized and most neglected.

Having experienced God’s grace, churches enthusiastically share grace with others. As churches participate in God’s mission they are not confined by borders or boundaries. They build relationships across ethnic, racial, cultural and socio-economic lines. They possess a global vision that compels them to take the gospel to unreached people. Forging

They possess a global vision that compels them to take the gospel

partnerships with Great Commission groups and individuals in order to minister holistically, they find creative ways to communicate the hope of the gospel. Some observers have coined the term “glocal” to describe the church that is ministering in both global arenas and its local setting. These churches embody God’s message of reconciliation through hospitality, mercy, inclusiveness, compassion, and justice.

What evidence do you see of a “glocal” mindset and activity in your church? How does your church share its faith with confidence and competence?

Embracing and serving those who are poor and who suffer. Churches on the missional journey recognize and respond to human hurt and suffering. They model Jesus’ sacrificial, servant mindset and behavior (Mk. 10:42-45; Phil. 2:3-8). Like the communal sharing and table fellowship of the early church, they share what they have and reach out to generously meet the needs of those in their neighborhood and around the world (Acts 2:44-45). These churches endure inconvenience and hardship as they identify with and serve “the least of these” (Matt. 25:31-40). They embody the Kingdom of God by welcoming and including the marginalized, oppressed, excluded, and those labeled as enemies. They see all people as God’s children and love all people as God loves.

They see all people as God’s children and love all people as God loves.

How does your church respond to the needs of the poor and suffering in your community?

The practice of authentic community and celebration of the promises of God’s presence. In their corporate life, churches on the missional journey demonstrate the Kingdom values by which God desires all people to live. They provide a compelling, contrasting culture of how to live as a society—a community of mutual submission, interdependence, authenticity, servanthood, and peace. The church provides an alternative to the rampant individualism, self-centeredness, and

myth of independence that defines the larger culture. In every way, the church's life together points to and provides a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. These churches also find fresh ways to celebrate the presence of God, energizing the community of faith with new experiences of awe and wonder, joy and gratitude. Worship serves as a central act of the community where believers proclaim the greatness of God, celebrate the goodness of God, and anticipate God's faithfulness with thanksgiving and expectancy.

How do the patterns of relationship in your church match those in the New Testament? How does your church practice and celebrate the presence of God?

Engaging the missional journey involves more than the missions committee or a mission project of a church. The missional journey involves every aspect of a congregation's life—even its budget! When Harry Rowland became pastor of the Baptist Church of Beaufort, South Carolina (BCB), he and the congregation shared a passion for their community. Initiating a futuring committee to lead the church through a visioning process, Rowland says the congregation offered its hopes, dreams, and passions. The futuring process resulted in a new focus and commitment to the community. This commitment was put to the test, Rowland says, when it involved the budget and the idea of purchasing a local house to convert into a homeless ministry. With its renewed missional focus, BCB understood that a church becomes truly missional when it ties every church function—including the budget—to its missional purpose.

For more information, see the story of the Baptist Church of Beaufort in Glimpses of Missional Faithfulness, p. 43.

Implications for Congregational Renewal

The world changed; the gospel hasn't. Ways of sharing the gospel changed; the message hasn't. Each generation of the church takes up the challenge to clothe the good news of Jesus Christ in terms that are true to God and faithful for a new time and place. Never has this challenge had greater urgency for North American Christians than today. Against the backdrop of major cultural shifts and the church's loss of societal status, missional churches seek to reframe their life and work.

The above six marks may help demonstrate important characteristics of churches seeking to engage the missional journey and participate in God's mission of reconciliation, redemption, and renewal. The marks have significant implications for the way churches orient their ministries, goals, and even organizational structures; these implications are contextual.

No specific program or agenda can lead a church to be missional. Churches engage the missional journey in a variety of ways depending on location, community needs, congregational giftedness, and God's calling. This section offers a few examples of these implications. These are not ideals to imitate, but examples to lead you to imagine ways in which you might embody missional marks in your own unique context.

No specific program or agenda can lead a church to be missional.

From attracting a crowd . . . to seeking the lost. Churches on the missional journey aren't waiting for the unchurched to come to them; rather, they're engaging the unchurched where they are. Rather than hoping people show up at the church door, the members of Holmeswood Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri reach out to their neighborhood through door-to-door prayer visits, community clean-ups, a neighborhood block-party, and a new Adopt-A-Block ministry. These changes, says minister Kathy Pickett, are "part of a change in the tenor of the congregation."

From a programming focus . . . to a ministry focus. Churches on the missional journey gauge success by how effectively they commission Christians in transformational ministry, not by how many programs they offer or how many people attend. In deciding how best to utilize a house on the church's property, Winter Park Baptist Church in Wilmington, North Carolina decided to investigate the spiritual and physical needs of the community. Rather than incorporating the building into one of their existing programs, the church opened the home as a place for local college students to live, which developed into a place for spiritual community.

From cultural aversion . . . to cultural immersion. Churches on the missional journey do not give into the temptation to become gated communities of faith in isolation from the prevailing culture. Churches on the missional journey immerse themselves in the life of culture as a witness, determined to serve as the dominant spiritual influence. Common Ground Church immersed itself in the large artist community of San Antonio, Texas, inviting local artists to participate in an art gallery event called Last Saturdays. Gathering in local coffee-shops or restaurants, the church members and community meet and talk over their shared passion for art, music, and poetry.

From a competitive, congregational focus . . . to a collaborative, Kingdom focus. Churches on the missional journey do not think of other churches as “competitors;” rather, they understand themselves as partners with all Great Commission Christians and look for opportunities to collaborate. Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama is an excellent example of cooperation and collaboration. Dawson partners with a missional worshipping community called Journey Church. Sensing no competition for members, Dawson congregants sometimes lead people to the innovative Journey community because it often provides unique opportunities not offered in existing Dawson ministries

From friendly fellowship . . . to the pursuit of true community. Churches on the missional journey are less satisfied with a veneer of cordiality among members. They want to experience the richness and depth of relationship described in the New Testament (Acts 2:42-47), and they shape their life together accordingly. Focusing on the disciplines of welcome and hospitality, Crosscreek Baptist Church in Pelham, Alabama embraces anyone who comes—anyone. Practicing authenticity, the Crosscreek community is a place for those who cannot find another place to fit. “We know we are flawed . . . but we are working on it,” says pastor Jay Kieve.

From a clergy-driven paradigm . . . to a people-of-God-driven paradigm. Churches on the missional journey understand that members do not exist merely to support clergy as they do

ministry; rather every member shares equal responsibility for the church's mission. First Baptist Church of Christ in Macon, Georgia incorporates the entire congregation in its discipleship process. Establishing mentoring relationships between adults and children, the church integrates missions, Bible study, and fellowship into this spiritual transformation process.

Every member shares equal responsibility for the church's mission.

From tradition-bound . . . to innovation-oriented. Churches on the missional journey learn how to honor the past without clinging to it. They willingly let go of outdated programs and strategies and take risks trying new approaches to ministry.

The Baptist Church of Beaufort, South Carolina risked by including the budgeting process into their missional vision. They let go of traditional mindsets about finances and allowed the missional vision to gain holistic traction in the ministry of the congregation to its community.

From member monopolizing . . . to member liberating. Churches on the missional journey understand that Christian commitment isn't measured by how involved a person is institutionally, rather, by how fully a person is living out the implications of faith. They are learning how to equip members for Christian life in the world. Rolling Hills Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas empowers members to serve in missional ministries such as a partnership with a local school. Moving beyond ready-made templates for missions, Rolling Hills encourages members to use their gifts, be they tutoring, making Christmas gifts for low-income children, working on a service project, or simply showing love to children.

From slot-filling . . . to gifts releasing. Churches on the missional journey tap into the gifts, passions, and callings of their people, recognizing this approach gives new life to their ministries and God's people. After realizing they were stuck in a culture of missions-funding, Huguenot Road Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia now focuses on releasing members to use their gifts in missional ministries. From Hurricane relief, to homeless ministry, to developing relationships with those at an assisted-living facility, to partnerships with other congregations for mission efforts, Huguenot Road encourages members to use their gifts to be the presence of Christ.

From a committee-driven culture . . . to a ministry-team culture. Churches on the missional journey organize as teams that act and make ministry decisions rather than as committees that make decisions from afar and then delegate ministry to others. They value decision-making that is fast, fluid, flexible, and relevant to people's needs. Trinity Baptist Church in Seneca, South Caro-

lina made a significant transition in its missions committee focus, moving from a concentration on mission trips to a missional focus: teaching and equipping members already doing missions in their own lives. For Trinity, education, communication, perspective, and passion were keys to moving toward a ministry team culture.

From institutional preservation . . . to self-sacrifice. Churches on the missional journey think first about how they can give themselves away rather than how they can protect their assets. They increase their tolerance for risk-taking and experimentation. As permission-giving cultures, they encourage their people to act on callings and venture out in self-giving service, faith, and love. In St. Louis, Missouri, and Bosnia and Serbia, the members of Kirkwood Baptist Church give themselves away in missions. Operating with a “glocal” focus, Kirkwood members ministers to immigrants in their own community, even starting a church, while also taking regular trips to Bosnia and Serbia to better learn the culture of the immigrants they serve.

You can read more about all of these stories and more in the CBF resource, Glimpses of Missional Faithfulness.

The Challenge and Hope of Missional Living

We, the Christians and churches of the twenty-first century, face great challenges as we live out our God-given mission. Given the power of the One who calls us, we face these great challenges with an even greater hope. God, through Christ, is bringing about the transformation of the world, and we are Christ's ambassadors to the world. God is calling all of us to participate in God's mission. This missional shift is more than a change in program or curriculum; it is a change in identity.

We have the privilege of being the presence of Christ. May God be glorified as we journey together!

Endnotes

1. Peter Drucker, *Post Capitalist Society* (New York: Harperbusiness, 1994), 3.
2. Loren B. Mead, *The Once and Future Church*, (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1991), 8-29.
3. Kennon Callahan, *Effective Church Leadership*, (San Fransisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 13.
4. George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998).

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Christian—is one who is fully committed to the way of Jesus Christ to such an extent that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus provide the perspective out of which one lives one's life and the model for service and mission in the world.

Church—is a group of Christians who commit themselves to Jesus Christ and, as the body of Christ, covenant together to engage in worship, spiritual maturation, ministry, and mission in the world.

A **Community of Missional Practice**—is a group of people/churches/organizations intentionally participating in the ongoing work of God around a common ministry passion or mission area. This engagement leads to networking, developing ministry goals and resources, serving together, and sharing best practice, stories, finances and prayer as they strive to embody the mission of God in the world.

The eight ministry passions/mission areas that have emerged as CBF Communities of Missional Practice are:

- Poverty/Transformation Ministries
- Disaster Response Ministry
- Internationals Ministries
- Church Starting/Faith Sharing
- Justice and Peacemaking Ministries
- Medical Ministries
- Economic Development Ministries
- Education Ministries

Context—is the particular place where we live, work, and find meaning. Context is the environment, framework, setting, or situation surrounding any life event or occurrence.

Culture—Culture is a way of life for a group of people--the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

Discipleship—is the act of patterning life after the teachings and example of a teacher. Christian discipleship is the patterning of life after the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. As a life-long commitment, Christian discipleship is the process of being formed *by* the Spirit, *through* the church, and *with the guidance of* the scripture into the Body of Christ. The goal of discipleship is the formation and transformation of identity, teaching us that we are who we are because of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Disciplines—are instructions imparted to disciples for the purpose of growth. Used in a Christian context, disciplines are activities which provide a space for growth in relationship to God, such as worship, Bible study, prayer, and service. On a personal level, disciplines are meditation, solitude, journaling, fasting, and keeping the Sabbath.

Evangelism—Sharing the good news of the love of God expressed in Jesus Christ.

Formation—a process of becoming. Used in a Christian context, the life-long process of becoming a person of faith (faith formation) in God or a disciple of Jesus (discipleship).

Globalization—is the widening, deepening, accelerating and growing closeness of inter-connect-edness and inter-relatedness in all aspects of contemporary life. Globalization encompasses the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual; it encompasses the economic, environmental, political, cultural, and religious lives of us all.

Kingdom of God—is wherever and whenever God reigns. The Kingdom of God is at hand. It is already but not yet. It is gift and demand. God demands of us that we live the new life which God gives. “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17).

Mission of God—God is on mission, renewing and reconciling a beloved world that is broken

and fallen. God's way of relating to our world is by giving. For God so loved the world that God gave . . ." (John 3:16). Our God is the God for people. God initiates and sustains this mission. The mission of God is most clearly expressed in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God includes us in this mission and actually uses us in it. We are all called to participate with God in this ministry of reconciliation

(II Corinthians 5:19). The church serves the mission of God which will be fulfilled when all of creation lives together in peace, justice, and right relationship with God. We live in faith that this kingdom has come one earth as it is in heaven.

Missional—means participating in the ongoing work of God to the extent that we are more interested in the mission of God than we are in the mission of an institution.

Missional Engagement—is a heart response to God's call lived out in active involvement in the ongoing work of God. Ideally missional engagement is entered into holistically, collaboratively and with a goal toward building sustainability. It may be a one time event but most often becomes a commitment of relationship with praying, going and giving as its essence until the goal of sustainability is achieved.

Missional Journey—is the spiritual adventure of participating in the ongoing work of God. Just as Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and humankind, so do we. The Missional journey is the process of growing more and deeper into God's will and redeeming work.

Appendix 2:

Missional Bibliography and Web Links

CBF is committed to resourcing partnering congregations with resources for the missional journey. One way that CBF accomplishes this mission is by recognizing outside resources and links helpful to the missional conversation and journey. The following resources and Web links are worth exploring.

Books

- Guder, D. L. (2000). *The continuing conversion of the church*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Guder, D. L. (Ed.). (1998). *Missional church: A vision for the sending of the church in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Hunsberger, G.R. and Van Gelder, C. (Eds.). (1996). *The church between gospel and culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Long, J. (2004). *Emerging hope: A strategy for reaching postmodern generations*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Robinson, M. and Smith, D. (2003). *Invading secular space: Strategies for tomorrow's church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Monarch Books.
- Roxburgh, A. J. (2005). *The sky is falling: Leaders lost in transition*. Eagle, ID: ACI Publishing.
- Roxburgh, A. J. and Romanuk, F. (2006). *The missional leader: Equipping your church to reach a changing world*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Rusaw, R. and Swanson, E. (2004). *The externally focused church*. Loveland, CA: Group Publishing.
- Van Gelder, C. (Ed.). (1999). *Confident witness—changing world: Rediscovering the gospel in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Van Gelder, C. (2000). *The essence of the church: A community created by the spirit*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

- Wright, C.J.H. (2006). *The mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Banks, Robert and Julia Bank. *The Church Comes Home: Regrouping the People of God for Community and Mission*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997.
- Barrett, Lois Y. *Storm Front: The Good News of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Barrett, Lois Y. *Treasures in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Blauw, Johannes. *The Missionary Nature of the Church: A Survey of the Biblical Theology of Mission*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962.
- Bosch, David J. *Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Culture*. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995.
- Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1991.
- Bosch, David J. *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* New Foundations Theological Library. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980.
- Cole, Neil. *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- Dubose, Francis. *God Who Sends: A Fresh Quest for Biblical Mission*. Nashville: Broadman, 1983.
- Erre, Mike. *The Jesus of Suburbia: Have We Tamed the Son of God to Fit Our Lifestyle?* Nashville: W Pub. Group, 2006.
- Escobar, Samuel. *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* Christian Doctrine in Global Perspective. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Frost, Michael and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003.
- Frost, Michael. *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture*. Hendrickson, 2006.
- Glasser, Arthur F. and Charles Van Engen. *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.
- Guder, Darrell L. *Be My Witnesses: The Church's Mission, Message, and Messengers*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Guder, Darrell L. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Guder, Darrell L. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Guder, Darrell L. *The Incarnation and the Church's Witness*. Wipf & Stock, 2005.

- Hirsch, Alan. *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006.
- Hunsberger, George, and Craig Van Gelder. *The Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Hunsberger, George R., et al. *Developing the Missional Church: Essays from the Reformed Review (Autumn, 1998)* The Gospel and Our Culture Series. Holland, MI: Gospel and Our Culture Network, 1998.
- Kaiser, Walter C. *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.
- Keifert, Patrick R. *We Are Here Now: A New Missional Era*. Eagle, Idaho: Allelon, 2006.
- Kimball, Dan. *They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Koenig, John. *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
- Kostenberger, Andreas J. and Peter T. O'Brian. *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*. InterVarsity, 2001.
- Kraybill, Donald B. *Upside-Down Kingdom*. Scottsdale, PN: Herald, 2003.
- Larkin, William J. Jr. and Joel F. Williams. *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*. Orbis, 1998.
- Lewis, Robert, Wayne Cordeiro, Warren Bird, and Leadership Network (Dallas Tex.). *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the inside Out*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- McNeal, Reggie. *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- Minatrea, Milfred. *Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion & Practices of Missional Churches*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
- Murray, Stuart. *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004.
- Myers, Joseph R. *Organic Community: Creating a Place Where People Naturally Connect*. Baker, 2007.
- Myers, Joseph R. *The Search to Belong: Rethinking Intimacy, Community and Small Groups*. Zondervan, 2003.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.

- Newbiggin, Lesslie. *The Open Secret: Introduction to a Theology of Mission*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Nussbaum, Stan. *A Reader's Guide to Transforming Mission*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2005.
- Oldenburg, Ray. *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of the Community*. Marlowe & Company, 1999.
- Peatross, Fred. *Missio Dei—in the Crisis of Christianity*. Cold Tree Press, 2007.
- Peterson, Jim and Mike Shamy. *The Insider: Bringing the Kingdom of God Into Your Everyday World*. NavPress, 2003.
- Pohl, Christine D. *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Roxburgh, Alan J. & Fred Romanuk. *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Roxburgh, Alan J. *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership & Liminality* Christian Mission and Modern Culture. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.
- Roxburgh, Alan J. *The Sky is Falling: Leaders Lost in Transition*. Eagle, Idaho: ACI Publishing, 2005.
- Rusaw, Rick and Eric Swanson. *The Externally Focused Church*. Loveland, CO: Group, 2004.
- Stott, John R. W. *Christian Mission in the Modern World*. London: Church Pastoral Aid Society, 1977.
- Sweet, Leonard I. *Aquachurch*. Loveland, CO: Group, 1999.
- Van Engen, Charles. *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.
- Van Engen, Charles. *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- Van Gelder, Craig. *Confident Witness—Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America*. Eerdmans, 1999.
- Van Gelder, Craig. *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*. Baker, 2007.
- Van Gelder, Craig. *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Van Gelder, Craig. *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry*. Eerdmans, 2007.
- Winn, Albert C. *A Sense of Mission: Guidance from the Gospel of John*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981.
- Wright, Christopher J.H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006.

Articles

- Bliese, Richard. "The Mission Matrix: Mapping Out the Complexities of a Missional Ecclesiology." *Word & World* 26, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 237-248.
- Bosch, David J. "Evangelism: Theological Currents & Cross-currents Today," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11, no. 3 (July 1987): 99.
- Christensen, Derek. "Marketplace and Missional Church." *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought & Practice* 13, no. 1 (February 2005): 13-18.
- Engelsviken, Tormod. "Missio Dei: The Understanding and Misunderstanding of a Theological Concept in European Churches." *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 367 (October 2003): 481-497.
- Fjeld, Roger W. "A Set-Apart and a Sending-Out Community." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 16, no. 5 (Oct. 1989): 337-340.
- Goheen, Michael W. "The Missional Church: Ecclesiological Discussion in the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America." *Missiology* 30, no. 4 (October 2002): 479-490.
- Goheen, Michael W. "As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You: Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology." *International Review of Mission* 91, no. 362 (July 2002): 354. [NOTE: Entire dissertation available at: <http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/dissertations/1947080/full.pdf>]
- Guder, Darrell L. "Incarnation and the Church's Evangelistic Mission," *International Review of Mission* 83, no. 330 (July 1994): 417-28.
- Guder, Darrell L. "Missional Theology for a Missionary Church." *Journal for Preachers* 22, no. 1 (1998): 3-11.
- Guder, Darrell L. "Worthy Living: Work and Witness from the Perspective of Missional Church Theology." *Word & World* 25, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 424-432.
- Hunsberger, George R. "Birthing Missional Faithfulness: Accents in a North American Movement." *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 365 (April 2003): 145-152.
- Kostenberger, Andreas J. "The Place of Mission in New Testament Theology: An Attempt to Determine the Significance of Mission within the Scope of the New Testament's Message as a Whole." *Missiology* 27, no. 3 (July 1999): 347-362.
- Matthey, Jacques. "God's Mission Today: Summary and Conclusions." *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 367 (October 2003) 579-587.
- Mercer, Calvin. "Jesus the Apostle: Sending & the Theology of John." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35, no. 4 (Dec. 1992): 457-462.
- Randall, Ian M. "Mission in post-Christendom: Anabaptist and Free Church Perspectives." *Evangelical Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (July 2007): 227-240.

- Riem, Roland. "Mission-Shaped Church: An Emerging Critique." *Ecclesiology* 3, no. 1 (September 2006): 125-139.
- Sutherland, Martin. "The Kingdom Made Visible: A Missional Theology of Church." *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought & Practice* 13, no. 1 (February 2005): 2-7.
- Turnipseed, Lawrence R. "Turning to God: Missional Responses in the Changing U.S. Context." *International Review of Mission* 87, no. 347 (October 1998): 525-534.
- Ulrich, Daniel W. "The Missional Audience of the Gospel of Matthew." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (January 2007): 64-83.
- Van Gelder, Craig. "Rethinking Denominations and Denominationalism in Light of a Missional Ecclesiology." *Word & World* 25, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 23-33.

Web Links

- <http://becomingmissional.blogspot.com/>
- <http://www.missionalchurch.org/>
- <http://www.emergentvillage.com/>
- <http://www.friendofmissional.org/>
- <http://gtng.typepad.com/>
- <http://www.missional.org/>
- <http://www.netresults.org/>
- <http://www.newbegin.net/>
- <http://www.the-next-wave.org/>
- <http://www.senchurch.com/>
- <http://lchouinard.blogspot.com/2006/01/missional-church.html>
- <http://www.blindbeggar.org/>
- <http://www.ekklesiaproject.org/>
- <http://www.gocn.org/main.cfm>
- http://www.theofframp.org/missional_comm.html