The Center for Congregations periodically undertakes resource inquiries to explore resources that address a particular area of interest to congregations. In 2010 this inquiry began to discover resources on the missional church. This document is intended to provide congregations with resource recommendations that support missional engagement in a post-Christian context. It contains a broad range of the best of these resources, selected from the large body of missional church resources currently available. These resources represent the wisdom and guidance of practitioners/theologians from across the congregational landscape. The list includes books, organizations, websites, web-based resources and persons.

It is hoped that this document and its recommended resources enrich the ongoing conversation about opportunities and challenges in the 21st Century and, ultimately, contribute to congregations’ capacity to fulfill their missions.

Much has been written about the western church. Today, the church lives in a post-Christian world, where the majority culture is no longer a reliable ally, no longer shares its language or values, and where individuals no longer find it culturally imperative to participate in church life.

Missional church resources address this new reality. The term missional church is something of a buzzword these days. Missional reflections and resources are featured in blogs, websites, periodicals, books, denominational events and continuing education offerings. It pops up in conversations among congregational leaders. An internet search of the term yields nearly 200,000 results.

So what does “missional” mean? What is a “missional church”?

What is Missional Church?
Missional Church is a term that entered popular usage with the publication in 1998 of Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, edited by Darrell Guder (Grand Rapids, MI:
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998). It originally referred to the challenge and opportunity presented to the Western church by the disestablishment of religion during the final decades of the 20th Century.

**The Missional Church Perspective**

The missional church perspective asserts the following: In today’s post-Christian, multi-cultural society, the church can no longer count on a “Christian” culture for support, respect or participation in congregational life. At the same time, congregations discover that the “mission field” is no longer located in a faraway land. It is their community. The church today finds itself on the borderland of culture rather than at its center. This new social location provides an imperative for a new kind of engagement among the gospel, the congregation and the neighborhood. This missional engagement means a shift from program-based, staff-led and consumer-sensitive ministries to disciple-making, servant-based ministries that grow out of prayerful discernment of where God is already at work in the world.

As the term missional church implies, the earlier notion of mission as a noun — something the church has or does or, more to the point, sends others to do on its behalf – is replaced by a descriptor of a church which is itself sent. It is sent not on its own mission but on God’s mission.

Michael Slaughter, long time pastor of Ginghamburg Church, expresses the essential meaning of missional church in this way, “No matter what programs we plan or experiences we offer for the people who show up for worship each weekend, we must remember that the true purpose is not to bring the world into the church but to take the church into the world.”

While originally addressed to churches participating in the western church ecumenical movement, the missional church conversation has been taken up and adapted by a wide variety of ministry practitioners such as new church developers, non-denominational and mega-church leaders, and emergent church pioneers. At the same time there has been much experimentation and practice in missional transformation among mainline congregations and their leaders. These practitioners are creating a rich array of resources based on what they are learning.

**Understanding Missional Church**

Congregations might benefit from missional church resources even if they are not seeking to become missional. Here are a few scenarios where missional church resources might be helpful:

- **Congregations are in decline and want to understand why.** Many missional church resources address the post-Christendom era of today. They explain why approaches that have “worked” in the past no longer compel participation or ownership, and suggest what is required of congregations seeking to be faithful in the current day.
• **Congregations want to serve the neighborhood.** Many congregations are located in neighborhoods where its members no longer live. They are turning their attention back to the neighborhood and are looking for guidance on how to begin.

• **Congregations are looking for transformation resources.** Missional church resources offer theological, biblical, even sociological insights into the current congregational landscape, and many offer practical guidance for needed change. Most of the resources on this list include discussion guides and other tools to facilitate transformation.

• **Congregations are looking for local options for a “mission trip” experience.** Missional church resources challenge a traditional understanding of mission trips as going to a needy place and improving it. Rather, they encourage participants to see mission as a partnership, a relationship among people of differing circumstances but with gifts to share. These resources offer creative ways to connect to the local community.

• **Congregations want to get to know their neighborhoods.** Missional church resources offer a conceptual map for street-level exploration that enables the congregation to learn firsthand about the issues, challenges and gifts to be found in the neighborhood.

**Want to Learn More?**

There are a number of helpful summary articles on missional church. Here are three, along with a web link for each:

*The Missional Church* by Tim Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church of America. In this article, Keller discusses the need for a “missional” church from an evangelical perspective and describes five elements of a missional church, based on his experience as pastor of a large inner city congregation. [http://www.redeemer2.com/resources/papers/missional.pdf](http://www.redeemer2.com/resources/papers/missional.pdf)

*Six Characteristics of a Missional Church* by Rev. Dr. Ronald Carlson, Missional Church Strategist for National Ministries, American Baptist Church, USA. Carlson discusses six “missional DNA markers.” The article includes questions for discussion. [http://www.nationalministries.org/missional_church/docs/MCT_Six_Characteristics_Missional_Church.pdf](http://www.nationalministries.org/missional_church/docs/MCT_Six_Characteristics_Missional_Church.pdf)

*What is the Missional Church? A Brief Introduction* by Bill Reinhold, Philadelphia Presbytery, Presbyterian Church, USA. Reinhold provides a historical overview, relates current congregational context to that of the churches in Acts, and lists characteristics of missional members and missional congregations. [http://www.churchinnovations.org/02_missional/mc_intro.html](http://www.churchinnovations.org/02_missional/mc_intro.html)
**RESOURCES YOU CAN USE**

**BOOKS**


From the “Gospel and Our Culture” series, this book contains case studies of nine missional congregations (Mennonite, Catholic, Presbyterian, Four Square Gospel, etc.) in North America and identifies eight patterns they have in common. “Twelve Indicators of a Missional Church” is on pp.1 59-172. This resource, which is more academic than practical, is useful for understanding characteristics of the missional church.


Designed to help leaders of smaller churches guide people in making their primary focus ministering to and meeting the needs of those outside their church. Bickers challenges leaders to become the agents of change their churches need as they seek to answer and act on the question: Who are we here for? Helpful chapter summaries offer action suggestions. The resource is an engaging, entry level book aimed at pastors.


Not missional per se, but a great resource for congregations looking to nurture servanthood in children. Aimed at Christian Education/Family Ministries staff, parents and volunteers, this is a one-book enrichment curriculum that provides developmentally appropriate activities and worship templates for K-5th graders; a parent workshop guide; ideas for engaging the congregation and additional resources.


Focus is on re-examining who Jesus is and, in turn, what it means to follow him. Useful inserts include stories of people who took Jesus seriously and practical ideas for personal renewal. Lots of quotes from a broad range of sources historical, contemporary, theological and literary. The book is dense and theological and is a good study resource for sophisticated readers. Authors come from an Evangelical perspective but are active as resource persons in Mainline circles as well.

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**IT IS NOT THE CHURCH of God that has a mission. It is the God of mission that has a church.**

- Rowan Williams
  Archbishop of Canterbury


This resource helps existing small groups see beyond their circles into the lives of others in their communities. The authors discuss the value of small groups in discerning and nurturing God’s call to serve a hurting world. Included are “Practice Lessons” and “Questions to ponder for your group.” Appropriate for small group study.

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- Rowan Williams
  Archbishop of Canterbury

This missional classic, a collection of essays by members of the Gospel and Our Culture Network, is widely credited with popularizing the term missional church. It addresses the question, “What would a theology of the church look like that took seriously the fact that North America is now itself a mission field?” This resource is highly theoretical and theological, appropriate for theologians/scholars. Chapter seven on missional leadership describes what is required of congregational leaders in a missional context. Especially helpful is the discussion of bounded and centered sets to describe the shift in congregational boundary-image that the missional church embodies.


“Mission is a process of creatively applying the whole gospel to a particular setting.” This resource is not missional per se, but illustrative of what missional means in the urban/suburban context. It focuses on the spiritual possibilities of neighborhoods and contains a “neighborhood exegesis” exercise; lots of stories, illustrations; authentic voice and is written in an Australian context. The book is addressed perhaps more to individuals than to congregations.


The author provides strategies for connecting the church with its surrounding culture through active engagement in community service. Each chapter contains questions, making the book appropriate for small group study.


The author is Leadership Network’s Missional Leadership Specialist. This book discusses three necessary shifts in congregational leaders’ thought and behavior: from internal to external focus; from running programs to developing people as its core activity; from church-based leadership to community-engaged leadership. This resource has broad appeal, biblical tie-ins, practical suggestions and is appropriate for leadership, small group and individual study.


With the voice of a congregational insider/old timer, McNeal presents six questions designed to move the institutional church from “churchian-
“Just doing the same thing better and harder will not create a better ministry outcome,” he says. The resource has broad appeal and is appropriate for leadership, small group and individual study. Also available: The Present Future DVD Collection (978-0-7879-8673-5), which is Reggie McNeal’s DVD presentation of the ideas and insights featured in his book in ten sessions, including leader and participant guides.

Minatrea, Milfred. Shaped by God’s Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004. Minatrea, former staff for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, is director of the Missional Church Center. This book draws on a two-year study of 200 congregations from a variety of denominations and geographic regions to show how these vibrant congregations are abandoning themselves to God’s purpose in mission. It presents best practices for reenergizing Christian spirituality in a congregational setting. The resource includes a “Missional Practice Assessment” tool, “Reflection and Application” study guide and suggested reading. Shaped by God’s Heart is appropriate for leadership and small group study.

Nelson, Gary V. Borderland Churches: A Congregation’s Introduction to Missional Living. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2008. The church today is in a “borderland” place. Using the image of Joshua crossing the Jordan, Gary Nelson characterizes the church’s current disestablishment as one of being “in between” and “on the road.” This book helps individuals and groups think about the challenges and opportunities for faithful living that this “borderland” social location presents. It contains questions for reflection and discussion. The appendix includes further resources, including several related to getting to know your neighborhood, a bibliography and recommended websites. This resource is perhaps one of the best for group discussion.


Rizzo, Dino. Servolution: Starting a Church Revolution Through Serving. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009. This author/pastor blends scripture and stories to describe how his congregation has been transformed and serves as an agent of transformation through service to the community. Although not missional per se, it a good resource to show how a missional congregation might look and what it might do by offering good ideas for service. Chapters end with “Servolution Strategy” questions for reflection and action, making the book appropriate for small group study.

focus and ends with “Discovery” Questions and “Additional Resources for the Journey.” It includes a “Vision for Ministry survey” (p.51)
Aimed more at the head than the heart, this book is more theoretical than practical. It is addressed to congregational leaders and appropriate for small group study.


“Any leader can acquire the tools and skills to lead a missional church” (p.112). This book presents a way of understanding how leaders can form missional congregations. The authors are practitioners and consultants in the field. There are illustrative stories from their consulting practice and helpful tables and other graphics. The final chapter “Putting Together a Team for Leadership Development” outlines a process for engaging and developing congregational leaders for missional change. This is a strong resource for leaders.


This workbook is based on the workshop by the same name. It is designed for congregations to self-facilitate the workshop process. Not a quick fix, this resource invites the congregation to enter into a process of “listening/engaging/dwelling” for long-term transformation of the congregation and the neighborhood. It is available for purchase via web download at http://www.roxburghmissionalnet.com.


The authors do not use the term missional but their book describes how a church relates to the community in which it lives. With a Biblical focus, each chapter ends with “something to think about, something to talk about, something to act upon,” and a sermon/lesson idea with scripture and helps. Lots of stories illustrate their points. The book is appropriate for leader study.


Sine blends missional, emergent and mosaic churches. This book is a good read for clergy and lay leaders as a way of thinking about missional concepts. There are questions at the end of each chapter. More theoretical than practical, this book is appropriate for small group discussion.


Pastor of Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church

A MISSIONAL CHURCH is an authentic community of faith that primarily directs its ministry focus outward toward the context in which it is located and to the broader world beyond.

- Ronald Carlson
  American Baptist Church
  National Ministries
Church for 30 years, Slaughter discusses seven choices congregations must make as they consider their future. He advocates a focus of time, energy and budget not on ‘getting the world into church, but on getting the church into the world.’ Includes stories from Ginghamsburg and questions for reflection. This resource is appropriate for leadership study and discussion. Slaughter is an Asbury grad with an evangelical leaning, but his writings have broad appeal.


The book includes characteristics of the externally-focused congregation. This Leadership Network title is an example of how the missional church conversation is intertwined across the congregational renewal landscape. The resource includes citations from a broad range of sources, scriptural underpinnings, illustrative stories, and is visually pleasing. “Leadership Challenge” segments invite reflection and action. It is appropriate for congregational leaders.

**Organizations**

**Broadway United Methodist Church**

[http://www.broadwayumc.org](http://www.broadwayumc.org)

Michael Mather, pastor

609 E. 29th St., Indianapolis, IN.

317-924-4207

Broadway’s *Miracle on 29th Street* program illustrates neighborhood engagement in the missional sense ([http://miracleon29th.com](http://miracleon29th.com)). The *We’re Out* campaign celebrates the Monday-Friday ministries of the community – church and neighborhood, both.

**Center for Parish Development**

[http://www.missionalchurch.org](http://www.missionalchurch.org)

CPD’s mission is to discover how the church in general and the local church in particular can learn to discern and participate in God’s mission more faithfully and effectively. They offer consulting, events and resources.

CPD’s cohort learning process is called “Journey of the People of God: Discovering, Discerning, Embodying” for judicatories and congregational cohort groups.

**Church Innovations**

[http://www.churchinnovations.org](http://www.churchinnovations.org)

This missional research and consultant organization is headed by Patrick Keifert (Luther Seminary). Resources include essays, bibliographies, videos on missional themes, e-newsletter, consultants with a variety of areas of expertise, online process tools and model training modules. “Partnership for Missional Church” is CI’s missional transformation process for congregational cohorts; Church FutureFinder is an on-line resource for congregational self assessment and discernment. CI co-sponsors with Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, a think tank to track and examine developments in missional church. In this brief video, Patrick Keifert explains what is meant by “Missional Church” ([http://www.](http://www.))
Keifert’s “Church History in Under 15 Minutes” discusses the historic relationship between the church and its environment (http://www.churchinnovations.org/vid05.html).

Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church
http://www.ginghamsburg.org
Michael Slaughter, pastor
Ginghamsburg’s new multi-year Change the World Network resources coaches and trains congregation/clergy cohorts to become missional regardless of size, location or resources.

Gospel and Our Culture Network
http://www.gocn.org/
Craig Van Gelder
George Hunsberger
Lois Barrett
Inagrace Dietterich
Alan Roxburgh
Darrell Guder
This network brings together “Christian leaders from a wide array of churches and organizations who are working together on the frontier of the missionary encounter of the gospel with North American assumptions and perspectives, preferences and practices.” (David Bosch, Transforming Mission, p.16) Focus is on publication.

Leadership Network
http://www.leadnet.org/
Reggie McNeal
Eric Swanson
Rick Rusaw.
Believing that meaningful conversations and connections can change the world, Leadership Network seeks to help leaders of innovation navigate the future by exploring new ideas together to find application to their own unique contexts. Publications and missional training for congregation/clergy cohorts are available. Website includes free downloads.

Mennonite Mission Network
http://www.mennonitemission.net
Missio Dei Series pdf downloads.

National Ministries, American Baptist Church, USA
http://www.nationalministries.org
Dr. Ronald Carlson, missional church strategist
Glynis LaBarre, transformation strategist.
Missional church transformation resources and free downloads are available. A 2008 grant from the Frank E. Clark Charitable Trust funded a “Missional Church Learning Experience” that was offered to small-membership congregations including some in Indiana.

Roxburgh Missional Network: Catalyst for Missional Transformation
http://www.roxburghmissionalnet.com
Alan Roxburgh
Fred Romanuk
Scott Boren
John McLaverty
Mark Lau Branson
This group offers missional transformation processes and coaching. Website includes missional bibliography and video interviews. Indiana Region Disciples of Christ has engaged Roxburgh’s program for training congregational cohorts in missional transformation.
World Mission Initiative
http://www.worldmissioninitiative.org
This is a fellowship of Presbyterians dedicated to:
developing mission vision, nurturing missionary vocation and cultivating missional congregations. The group presents an annual WMI conference, from which keynote videos are available for download. The 2010 conference featured Michael Frost. The group is affiliated with Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

Presbyterian Global Fellowship
http://sendingout.com
This is a network of mostly Presbyterian individuals and congregations existing “to transform mainline congregations into missional communities following Jesus Christ.” Presbyterian Global Fellowship offers webinars, events, blogs, Twitter and Facebook. Recent events have featured Allen Hirsch, Michael Frost, Reggie McNeal and Alan Roxburgh.

Denominations
In addition to those organizations listed above, a number of denominations offer missional church resources. To learn what is available, visit denominational websites and search using the keyword “missional.”

Websites

Friend of Missional
http://www.friendofmissional.com
Links to dozens of articles on missional and related topics are part of this website resource.

Initiatives Missional
http://www.imissional.org
This website includes essays and articles on missional themes: Missional Church, Missional Hermeneutics, Missional Spirituality, Missional Leadership and Missional Theology.

Missional Church Network
http://www.missionalnetwork.com
“This site exists to provide resources and encouragement to those who desire to see the church recapture its missionary nature and once again be sent into the world to participate in God’s mission.” It includes blog posts, video interviews and presentations.

Shapevine: Missional Resources, Ideas, and People
http://www.shapevine.com
This site includes e-campus, e-coaching and e-courses. Lance Ford and Alan Hirsch co-founded and direct the site, sponsored by Christianity Today. They offer a congregational cohort Missional Transformation training process.

Tyndale University College and Seminary
http://www.tyndale.ca/seminary/inministry/reading-rooms/missional-church
The website includes Missional Church Online Reading Room with links to dozens of articles related to various missional church areas: Foundational texts, Leadership, Hermeneutics, Theology Education websites and blogsites.
YouTube
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arxfLK_sd68
“The Missional Church - Simple “ video
This delightful two-minute video uses simple animation to illustrate what it means to be a missional church.

Persons
Will Jewsbury
Pastor
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Kokomo, IN
wjewsbury@sbcglobal.net
765-457-4491
FCC is one of seven congregations to participate in the first round of the Indiana Region CC(DoC) congregational transformation process led by Alan Roxburgh. Jewsbury is available as a conversation partner for congregations wishing to learn more about Roxburgh’s process as experienced by his congregation.

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Alan Roxburgh
http://www.roxburghmissionalnet.com
An author, coach and consultant, Roxburgh is a longtime participant in the Gospel and Our Culture Network.