

A Missional Planning Workbook For Congregations

Provided By:



and



Missional Planning Workbook for Congregations

Questioner:

"Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus:

"What is written in the law? What do you read there?"

Questioner:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind;
and your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus:

"You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

Questioner:

"But who is my neighbor?"

The Jesus opened their hearts and minds by telling a story...

IMPORTANT NOTE

This worksheet is designed to serve as an outline and a workbook.
For most effective use, I suggest engaging with the presenter, rather than reading along,
knowing that you will have an outline of the presentation when you are done.
Meanwhile, you may use the blank spaces provided to jot down thoughts, questions, and ideas.

Blessings and thanks!

Kent

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Strategic Missional Planning for Congregations An Introduction

Before we get down to the proverbial brass tacks of Missional Plan, perhaps we should define our terms.

What exactly is missional?

And what exactly is a missional plan?

What is Missional?

Given that the term “missional” is becoming ubiquitous in ecclesiastical circles these days, you might think that there would be something like universal agreement on what people mean when they use it. You might think that. But you’d be wrong.

Sometimes it seems like there are as many meanings of “missional” as there are people using the term, with different connotations that attach depending on the theopolitical orientation of the persons employing it. There are Christians on both sides of the theopolitical spectrum who approve of the term. There are also those on both ends of the spectrum who are suspicious of it: self-described “liberal” or “progressive” Christians who don’t like it because it sounds “conservative” to them and self-described “conservative” Christians who think it sounds suspiciously “liberal.” For some people, “missional” is interchangeable with “emerging,” others with “missionary,” others with “evangelical.” Still others describe “missional Churches” as being the opposite of “attractional churches:” a model of evangelism in which every member of the church is an evangelist, going out into the community to bring people to Jesus, rather than waiting for them to show up at the church for the process of evangelism to begin. And while emerging churches, missionary churches, evangelical churches, and community-focused evangelism can be “missional,” the fact that those different strands of ecclesiology transpose those terms demonstrates that “missional” is not *equivalent* to any of those terms.

Christopher Duraisingh’s article, “From Church-Shaped Mission to Mission-Shaped Church,” is perhaps the most thorough exploration of the meaning of “missional.” Drawing much from Asian evangelical theology, and specifically pointing to Acts 1:8, he argues that rather than thinking of the Church’s missionary calling as an outgrowth of a mission that God has given to the Church, it is more Biblically authentic to think of the missionary calling of the Church as a response: as discerning where God’s Spirit is already at work on God’s mission and then discerning what part of that already-present activity of the Spirit God is calling them to participate in. He and others have called this way of thinking of mission “Concursus Dei” (God working in parallel with humanity). He argues that “missional” actions arise out of our “being in mission, being in a permanent openness to God and in God to the other, and to the world,” and that “everything the church is and does has a missionary dimension to it” or it is not the Church.

Practically speaking, then, I have found it helpful to think of being a “missional” church as about working to develop a divine symbiosis with your community, in which we are present in our neighborhoods as God’s Spirit is already present in our neighborhoods. A missional congregation does not think of the community as a way to meet the needs of the congregation. Nor does it think of itself as a bestower of good upon the community. Instead, it views itself and the community as equal partners in a common cause relationship with the Spirit of God.



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What is a Missional Plan?

Having taken the above exploration of the meaning of “missional,” answering the question “What is a Missional Plan?” becomes a lot more straightforward. It all boils down to answering these questions:

- Who are our neighbors?
- What are our neighbors like?
- What issues do our neighbors face?
- How is God’s Spirit already at work in our neighborhoods?
- How is God calling to us to participate in God’s mission in our community?

The rest is just to decide who will do what and when.

| Step 1: What Is Our Neighborhood? | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Actions | Notes, Comments, and Insights |
| Identify your congregation on a map. | |
| Identify your congregation's MissionWeb. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw a boundary line representing equidistant drive time between your congregation and each the surrounding same-denomination congregations. • 70% of your 1st-time visitors will come from this area (your lowest hanging fruit for marketing purposes). | |
| Identify your congregation's 15-Minute DriveTime. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw a boundary line representing a 15-minute drive in every direction from your congregation. • 70% of your members will come from this area. | |
| Count the number of same-denomination congregations within your 15-Minute DriveTime. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These will be your greatest competitors unless you may them your greatest collaborators. | |
| Draw a 15-Minute Drive Time around each of the surrounding same-denominations and note the percentage overlap between theirs and yours. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-50%: Informal collaboration. • 51-75%: Formal collaboration. • 76-99%: Consider merging. | |

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Step 2: Who Are Our Neighbors?

| Actions | Notes, Comments, and Insights |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <p>Review demographic/lifestyle data for your neighborhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources: ESRI, Mosaic, Percept. • What this says about your neighborhoods? • What this says about your congregation? | |
| <p>Review population growth data for your neighborhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which neighborhoods are growing? How much? • Which neighborhoods are declining? How much? • Which neighborhoods are stable/plateaued? | |
| <p>Review diversity data for your neighborhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your neighborhoods above or below average diversity? • What is the racial/ethnic/language makeup of your neighborhoods? • How does this compare to your congregation? | |
| <p>Review generational predominance data for your neighborhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What generation is predominant in each of your neighborhoods? • What is the overall balance of generations within your MissionWeb? 15 Min. DriveTime? • Are there enough older generations for current sustainability? Enough younger generations for current sustainability? | |
| <p>Review data on other population characteristics data for your neighborhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Predominance • Median Income. • Racial Predominance. • Specific age ranges (children, retired, etc.) | |

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Step 3: What Are Our Neighborhoods' Issues?

| Actions | Notes, Comments, and Insights |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Review poverty rate data for your neighborhoods. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the percentage ratio of people above poverty level to people below poverty level in each of your neighborhoods?• Which neighborhoods have the highest poverty levels?• Which neighborhoods have the lowest poverty levels? | |
| Review unemployment rate data for your neighborhoods. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the unemployment rate in each of your neighborhoods?• Which neighborhoods have the highest unemployment levels?• Which neighborhoods have the lowest unemployment levels? | |
| Review crime rate data for your neighborhoods. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does the crime rate in each of your neighborhoods compare to the national average?• Which neighborhoods have the highest crime rates?• Which neighborhoods have the lowest crime rates? | |
| Review for other data sources for potential community issues in your neighborhoods. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercise Data (correlates to health).• Racial Predominance (look for patterns of segregation).• Other data sources? | |

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Step 4: What Are Our Neighborhoods' Resources

| Actions | Notes, Comments, and Insights |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Identify public schools, private schools, colleges and universities in your neighborhoods. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note where they are.Note where they aren't. | |
| Identify hospitals and health care facilities in your neighborhoods. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note where they are.Note where they aren't. | |
| Identify childcare facilities in your neighborhoods. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note where they are.Note where they aren't. | |
| Identify senior care facilities in your neighborhoods. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note where they are.Note where they aren't. | |
| Identify other resources in your neighborhoods. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note where they are.Note where they aren't. | |

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Step 5: What Does It All Mean? (Developing and Testing Hypotheses from the Data)

| Actions | Notes, Comments, and Insights |
|--|-------------------------------|
| What do we think we know and believe about this population? | |
| What kinds of questions do we need to ask to confirm or correct what we think we know? | |
| Who do we have to talk to in the community to get accurate answers to those questions? | |
| Where will we have to go to find these people? | |
| Who will go? And when? | |

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Step 6: What Does It Say About Our Congregation? (Sustainability and Vitality)

| Actions | Notes, Comments, and Insights |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <p>What does what we have learned say about our External Sustainability?</p> <p>Data trends on things like population growth, diversity, and generational balance, along with the number of same-denomination congregations located within your MissionWeb, can tell you something about whether the community has the capacity – in people and resources – to support a congregation.</p> | |
| <p>What does what we have learned say about our Internal Sustainability?</p> <p>Examining similar trends in your congregation, such as attendance, diversity, child-to-adult ratio, and income, can tell you something about whether your congregation has the capacity – in people and resources – to support itself.</p> | |
| <p>What questions does what we have learned raise about our Congregational Vitality.</p> <p>Examining whether your congregation has sufficient desire and will to adapt to the characteristics, needs, and aspirations of the communities and people around it can tell you something about your congregation's vitality.</p> <p>To dive deeper download a free Congregational Vitality Assessment at http://bit.ly/FaithXCVA</p> | |

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Step 7: Where Do We Go from Here? (Developing a Congregational Missional Plan)

| Actions | Notes, Comments, and Insights |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Part 1 – Congregational Vision Summarize what you have discerned that God is calling the congregation to be and to do in one or two clear and concise sentences. | |
| Part 2 – Population Characteristics Organize and summarize what you have learned about the unique characteristics of the people in your neighborhoods, especially those who are not currently “at the table.” | |
| Part 3 – Community Issues Organize and summarize what you have learned about the issues people in your neighborhoods face. | |
| Part 4 – Community Resources Organize and summarize what you have learned about the resources and strengths that are already present in your neighborhoods and people. | |
| Part 5 – Opportunities and Strategies Organize and summarize what you have learned the opportunities that exist for you to serve the populations you learned are not at your table, and how your congregation will have to adapt itself to meet these opportunities. | |
| Part 6 – Milestones, Responsibilities, and Dates Set forth what needs to happen, who will do it, and by when. | |