

Ingredients of a Mission Study

Whether the process is over a few days or several months, the following are essential for a thorough study and evaluation by a congregation of its mission and purpose and development of its mission statement

1. Bible Study

Exploring together biblical texts that help to understand what it means to be the people of God, the Body of Christ

- Engaging the congregation in Bible Study using biblical images of the nature and purpose of the church (such as Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 2:41-47, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, 1 Peter 2:4-10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-27, and many more). See *Bible Study Ideas 05.12.11.doc*
- Relating studies of biblical passages to *The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity*, Chapter One, The Mission of the Church (Book of Order, Form of Government, F-1.01-0404. Focusing in particular on *The Great Ends of the Church* (F1.0304).

2. Congregational Analysis

Determining the who, where, how, and what of congregational life

- *Congregational Identity*: an analysis of who we are; the history, beliefs, world view, paradigms, patterns, norms, attitudes and traditions; as well as the internal demographics, generational breakdown, congregational personality/dna and the glue that holds this people together.
- *Congregational Context*: where we are; the external demographics as well as our social, denominational, community and cultural context, including assessment of community needs.
- *Congregational Process*: how we do things, how decisions are made (formal structure and informal process).
- *Congregational Program*: what it is we're doing and how well we are doing it, how could we do it better.

3. Mission Planning

Engaging in the process of planning our mission and ministry and putting together a mission statement

- *Futuring*: community projections and needs (schools, services); projections of church and community growth and/or decline.
- *Visioning*: "choosing the future we prefer," setting goals and directions. What is it we would like to do and be? What kind of church does God want us to be? What should we be doing in this community? What is our special mission? What is realistic? This process includes the developing of a concise goal and mission statement
- *Implementation*: Developing a timetable; carrying out the plan, who's going to do what when
- *Evaluation*: How's it going? Was it realistic? Where are we going from here?

Methods and Tools for Gathering the Data

- Congregational gathering(s); group discussions
- Surveys, Questionnaires, Interviews, Conversations, Observations: questions and answers
- Documents: newsletters, session records, previous mission studies and planning reports

Resources

- *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, eds. Bill McKinney, Nancy Ammerman, Jackson Carroll, and Carl Dudley, Abingdon, 1998.
- *A Handbook for Congregational Studies*, eds. Bill McKinney, Jackson Carroll, and Carl Dudley, Abingdon, 1986.
- *Smaller Church Mission Study Guide*, Henry A. Blunk, Geneva Press, 1978
- www.missioninsite.com for studying external demographics

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