

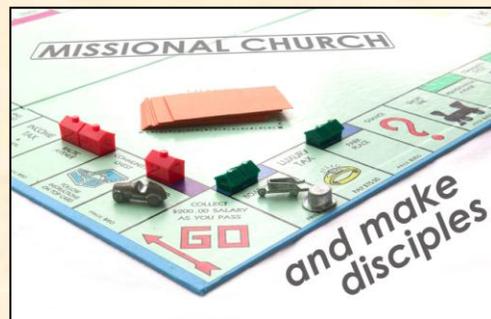
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### The Missional Conversation: What is God Doing in Our Midst?

by Tim Neufeld

Over the past year-and-a-half the Board of Administration, the Board of Spiritual Ministries and the pastoral staff have been working together to investigate what it means to be a missional church. Some interesting implications have emerged: we recognize that our church has grown and changed in recent years, we have examined the adequacy of our governance structure, and we have been challenged by the vision of our new lead pastor.

The missional church discussion has largely taken place at the leadership level, but that is about to change. Through a series of activities the congregation will be invited to share in the process. The boards have asked me to assist with the task because of my doctoral studies in missional church leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary. Through some useful tools we will begin to ask the key missional question, “What is God doing in our midst?”



The first tool that we will use is a survey. This 360-degree inventory of congregational life and thought is designed to give the leadership of NFC a snapshot of who we are. The survey will help us interpret how we have changed, how we feel about where we currently are as a body, and what we dream about doing in the future. The survey will be facilitated by a Guide Team that has been appointed by both the Boards of Administration and Spiritual Ministries. The job of the Guide Team is to “guide” us in the discussion of what it means to be missional and to ask again and again, “What is God up to?”

The Guide Team will also initiate a series of other listening events. There will be congregational meetings designed to process the data collected from the survey and additional meetings with the boards. The Guide Team will also form listening groups composed of a broad spectrum of the congregation so that all perspectives can be heard. The information gained from these focus-type groups will be scrutinized by the Guide Team and by the boards at a special retreat. The end goal of this 18-month process will be two to three initiatives that will help NFC boldly, creatively and sensitively prepare for the future.

The missional strategy assumes several things:

- God's spirit is among God's people
- God's people together discern God's voice
- Church leaders are responsible for enabling God's people to listen and speak to one another through the Spirit
- Every church serves in a specific context with a unique mission, so copying another church's model is not the answer
- God is already at work, we just need to join what he is already doing

The pastors, boards and Guide Team will be asking, "What is God doing?" and "What does he want to continue to do among us?" Please participate in the conversation! Be looking. Be sharing. Be listening. And don't be surprised with what God is going to reveal.

