



EQUIPPER

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Dear follower of Jesus, living on mission with God:

Equipper's mission, like that of all of CAD's resources and programs, is to *outfit GCI churches and ministries for a mission-focused journey with Jesus*. That statement reflects an important reality, namely that Jesus is alive and through the Holy Spirit ministering on earth. As his followers, our calling is not to do mission *for* Jesus, as though he were absent, but to participate *with* Jesus in what he now is doing in the power of the Spirit to fulfill the Father's mission to the world.



Ministry mindsets and approaches that live into that stunning reality are presented in two books that we in CAD find to be both theologically sound and relevant to our context:

- *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood* by Alan J. Roxburgh
- *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* by Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk

The theme of both books is summarized well in this statement:

At this point in our history, we need to be asking radically different questions: What is God up to in our neighborhoods and communities? How do we join with what God is doing in these places? (*Missional*, p. 22).

At this point in GCI's journey, we are asking these questions and prayerfully seeking answers in community. To help in our inquiry, we are blessed to have access to resources like these books (see representative quotes on page 2). Such resources can helpfully inform and shape our conversations in leadership and small group meetings as well as in district and regional gatherings. I hope this issue of *Equipper* will help guide these discussions.

By God's grace, we are learning together. And what we're learning is more than "head knowledge." Our goal is to encounter the reality of Jesus at work in our midst and within our communities and neighborhoods. What we're experiencing is that he works in amazing, often unexpected ways—showing stunning creativity and variety. Yet we see certain consistent foundational patterns in what he is doing. Learning to recognize and walk in those patterns is part of our "learning curve." These two books are helpful in facilitating that learning.

Another powerful source of information and inspiration for our journey are the testimonies that we're hearing from increasing numbers of GCI churches as they actively "join God in the neighborhood." We share their stories in print in *GCI Weekly Update* at update.gci.org/ and in Church Development videos at www.youtube.com/GCIChurchDev. If your church has a story about mission that you'd like to share, email me at Ted.Johnston@gci.org and I'll help you.

In Christ's service,
Ted Johnston, *Equipper* editor

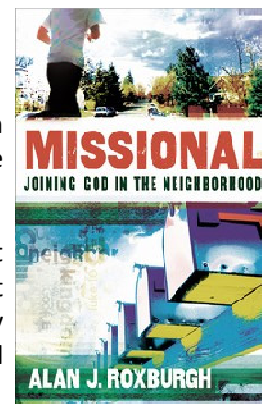
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Outfitting GCI churches and ministries for a mission-focused journey with Jesus.

Thoughts about joining God on mission

Following are quotes from *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood* by Alan Roxburgh. For related resources, see *The Missional Network* website at www.themissionalnetwork.com/.



“An attractional church (...focused on how to get people to come to church) will not connect with growing numbers of people for whom church is nice to have around but is not integral to the structures of expectations of everyday life” (p. 15).

“When we are truly seeking to know what it means to be God’s people, we will want to know what God is up to in our neighborhoods and communities and what it means for the gospel to be lived out and proclaimed in this time and place. The matter of getting someone to church is utterly secondary to these insights. Now we are in a place where ecclesiology isn’t the issue. Missiology is.... A missional imagination is at the heart of the God of the Bible” (pp. 27, 48).

“How will we indwell both the gospel and the people in neighborhoods where we live and work so that we hear God speak to us in and through them?” (p. 48).

“For Luke [in Luke-Acts] the faithful God sends the boundary-breaking Spirit to form communities of Jesus characterized by *journeying sentness*” (p. 127).

“The primary way to know what God is up to in our world... is by entering into the ordinary, everyday life of the neighborhoods and communities where we live.... If you want to discover and discern what God is up to in the world just now, stop trying to answer this question from within the walls of your churches. Like strangers in need of hospitality who have left their baggage behind, enter the neighborhoods and communities where you live. Sit at the table of the other, and there you may begin to hear what God is doing” (p. 133, 134).

“We are to lay aside our anxious need to say the right words at the right place to get the right decisions and we are to enter the households, work beside people, and sit at tables where we can listen to their stories and enter their dialogue and, perhaps catch the wind of the Spirit as he births new forms of witness and life in a time grown tired of church conversations” (p. 145).

Following are quotes from *The Missional Leader* by Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk.

“A missional church is a community of God’s people who live into the imagination that they are, by their very nature, God’s missionary people living as a demonstration of what God plans to do in and for all of creation in Jesus Christ” (p. xv).

“[Biblical] leadership is about cultivating an environment that innovates and releases the missional imagination present among a community of God’s people” (p. 5).

“Congregations matter. But they need leaders with the skills to cultivate an environment in which the Spirit-given presence of God’s future may emerge among the people of God” (p. 9).

“A congregation must become a place where members learn to function like cross-cultural missionaries rather than be a gathering place where people come to receive religious goods and services” (p. 13).

“The missional leader...[cultivates] three new kinds of awareness in the congregation: First is the awareness of what God is doing among the people of the congregation.... Second is awareness of how a congregation can imagine itself as being the center of God’s activities.... Third is an awareness of what God is already up to in the congregation’s context [i.e. the surrounding neighborhood and community]” (pp. 31-32).

