

Developing a Roadmap by Ken Behnken

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When you take a road trip, you first gather maps and choose a route to your destination. Although this step takes some extra time up front, it saves a lot of time on the road. Since your route is mapped, you do not need to stop along the way and ask, “Could you tell us where we are and how we can get to a road that will take us where we want to go?” You won’t be going in circles because your map will give you direction and focus

Your congregation is also on a journey—a journey through your community to share the Gospel with as many people as will listen. In order to journey efficiently, doesn’t it make sense to prepare a roadmap, one that will help you know your community and discover which roads will be most effective for reaching the most people? Such a road map will give your members a direction, a focus, and purpose for their journey together.

A roadmap is important at a church’s birth. Twice a year the Center for U.S. Missions provides training for those who have been called to plant a new mission. One of the primary outcomes at this training is a tool which will allow each participant, with his core group, to develop a roadmap--a mission plan--for his new congregation. The sessions work on discovering the values, mission, purpose, vision, demographics, and strategy for this new church plant. With a mission plan, the members can work together with a common vision and focus to reach the unchurched in their community.

But it’s not just new mission congregations that need a mission plan. Every congregation needs such a plan to keep them focused on their journey. If you are taking your journey one day at a time, with no roadmap, you probably feel as if you are going in circles. Your people may wonder, “Why are we doing this?” Perhaps volunteers are getting “burned out” because they don’t feel that the time and work they dedicate is accomplishing anything. Proverbs tells us, “Without a vision, people perish.” (Proverbs 29:18). If your congregation has lost its vision and is looking for a new direction, this is a good time to develop a new mission plan.

For several years our training seminars have used *Advanced Strategic Planning*, an excellent book in which author Aubrey Malphurs describes mission plan development step by step. With Malphur’s approval and encouragement, I have recently finished writing an accompanying workbook to assist congregations construct a mission plan for their ministry. The workbook is *Developing a Mission Plan for your Ministry*. When your planning team has, step by step, worked through this workbook, it will have a completed mission plan. Watch the excitement and energy rise as your congregation focuses on a united plan for ministry and outreach in your community.

Aubrey Malphur's book and the workbook are available as a set from the Center for U.S. Missions for \$35 plus \$10 shipping and handling. They can be ordered by calling our office (949-854-8002 x1780) or on our website at www.centerforusmissions.com. ■