

Anti-Missional?

By Bob Young

With all of the talk about being missional, an important, related question is this: **Are there things that are anti-missional—things to be avoided by churches interested in becoming missional?**

I believe the answer is yes. Churches genuinely interested in being missional must evaluate whether they speak missional while their thinking and actions are anti-missional.

What are some indications of an “anti-missional” mindset in the church? Here is a starter list. You will be able to add your own observations and experiences.

- **Spending excess or disposable funds internally.** The budget is a prime indicator of whether a church is in missional or maintenance mode. What percentage of the budget is applied to missional outreach and activities? (If most of the work of the ‘minister’ or ministry staff is internally focused, churches must not deceive themselves by putting those expenses in the missional category. Church leaders can easily find out whether the work of the minister is internally or externally focused by evaluating church growth, outreach, visitor visits, baptisms, and new or restored members.) In my experience, although building improvements may be made under the missional banner, they often reflect internally-focused, anti-missional thinking.
- **Having most or all events at the church building.** The location of events and ministry often tells whether a church is seeking to be missional or attractional, internally or externally focused.
- **When the few events that are held away from the building are attended almost exclusively by members with few or no non-members present.**
- **When most of the efforts of the minister and paid staff are focused on the needs of the church** rather than outreach to the lost and hurting outside the church. Again, church leaders can easily find out whether the work of the minister is internally or externally focused by evaluating church growth, outreach, visitor visits, baptisms, and new or restored members
- **When the number of personal evangelistic Bible studies being conducted with potential Christians is few or none.**

When church activities are not continually focused missionally, they easily become anti-missional. Consider the following and think about how you would answer the “how” question.

- Much of our preaching is anti-missional. How?
- Our prayers can reflect an anti-missional attitude. How?
- Bible classes can easily become anti-missional. How?
- Fellowship and small groups often become anti-missional. How?

What would you add to these thoughts? What factors cause churches to operate in “anti-missional” mode? What are some of the characteristics of “anti-missional” thinking?