

missional *adj.* See various senses.

I. General etymology. II. Confused meaning. III. Status as buzzword.

I. The adjective *missional* in its various senses generally alludes to one or more of the following concepts: (1) the idea of “sending” or being “sent” (Latin *missio*); (2) a mission in the sense of the purpose of an organization; (3) a mission in the sense of a critical task; (4) the technical theological concept of the *missio Dei* (“mission of God”); (5) the idea that Christians are “missionaries” to their local communities and cultures.

II. Starting in the 1980s, Christians have occasionally remarked on the shifting and sometimes unclear meaning of the adjective *missional*: “The noun *missioner* and the adjective *missional* have come into current use to express shades of meaning not found in the traditional connotation of their representative near synonyms *missionary* and *mission*, used as both noun and adjective” (Dubose *God Who Sends* (1983) 35); “If you are confused by the term *missional church*, you are not alone—it’s so new that most Christians are still coming to terms with it” (Minatrea *Shaped By God’s Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches* (2004) 10); “The word *missional* has tended, over the years, to become very fluid, and it was quickly co-opted by those wishing to find new and trendy tags for what they were doing, be they *missional* or not” (Hirsch *The Forgotten Ways* (2009) 82); “*Missional* is a relatively new word that continues to face some ambiguity in definition” (Plummer *Forty Questions About Interpreting the Bible* (2010) 325); “Given the current confusion regarding what the word *missional* means, I want to make clear from the outset what I have in mind when I use this term” (Tyra *The Holy Spirit in Mission: Prophetic Speech and Action in Christian Witness* (2011) 22); “So, the term *missional* is now being appropriated at a massive rate. But so very often this is being done without the foggiest idea of what it actually means” (Frost *Road to Missional: The Journey to the Center of the Church* (2011) 11); “There is something a bit odd about the word *missional* and the phrase *Missional Christian*. Even though more and more people are using *missional* these days, it’s grammatically a bit of a stretch. . . . Many dictionaries don’t list such a word” (Everts *Go and Do: Becoming a Missional Christian* (2012) 10); “Seemingly a dozen books come out each year with the word *missional* in their title, but a survey of these books reveals that the word has significantly different meanings and is used in different ways by different authors, organizations, and churches—leading to much confusion about what, exactly, the term *missional* means” (Keller *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (2012) 251).

Therefore it can be difficult to determine exactly what *missional* means in a given context. Sometimes the term will neatly match one of the 7 senses defined below. Other times the term will incorporate two or more of these 7 senses. And there is no doubt that the term will continue to accumulate new senses over time, and these new senses will be clearly understood only by asking the people using the term to clarify what they mean when they say something is *missional*.

III. Since the late 2000s, Christians have frequently labeled the term *missional* as a buzzword: “One of the current buzzwords in what might be loosely characterized as the buzz marketing of the new and improved postmod-

ern church is the adjective *missional*” (Raschke *GloboChrist: The Great Commission Takes a Postmodern Turn* (2008) 62); “The term ‘missional church’ and the research project were intended to stimulate a conversation, which is certainly what happened. But in the process, the word ‘missional’ became a cliché, a buzz word, a catch-all phrase that could mean everything and nothing” (Guder in *Missiology XXXVII*. (2009) 65); “The word *missional* has become an evangelical buzzword that has been the subject of much discussion in recent years. . . . The phrase ‘becoming missional’ is in danger of turning into a cliché” (Jones, ed. *Perspectives on Family Ministry: Three Views* (2009) 177); “During the last ten years ‘missional church’ has become a buzzword in the North American context and beyond” (Mortensen, Nielsen *Walk Humbly with the Lord: Church and Mission Engaging Plurality* (2010) 167); “In recent years, as I’ve mentioned, *missional* has overtaken *emerging* as the defining buzzword of cool Christianity” (McCracken *Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide* (2010) 141); “The term *missional* (and its nearest kin *missional church*) seems to be in the ‘in’ word currently. In Christian circles everywhere people are using the word *missional*” (Synan *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century* (2011) 529); “Currently, it seems almost impossible to attend any Christian conference without hearing the word *missional*. Recently, a Christian leader said to me rather dismissively, ‘Missional—it’s the latest jargon that everybody is using, yet nobody really understands. Sounds good, though’” (Quicke *Preaching As Worship: An Integrative Approach to Formation in Your Church* (2011) 143).

See also *—AL WORDS; *incarnational; *missiologist; *missiology; *MISSIONS; *theological-missional.

1. Having to do with the church’s worldwide evangelistic and missionary efforts, especially in parts of the world where the people have never heard the gospel.

This is “missional” in the sense of God “sending” (Latin *missio*) Christians into the world to share the gospel. This mission began in earnest with the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20).

See also *missions-minded.

► 1882 *The Christian Monthly and Family Treasury for 1882* 169 : Pope Gregory VII . . . issued a circular in which he called upon Christendom to awake to the deliverance of Greece and Palestine by the conversion of the Saracens. But the missional idea, though to be effected by force of arms, was foreign to the sympathies of the age. The summons met no response. 1882 Bourne *The Heroes of African Discovery and Adventure* 191 : We must mention the famous Bishop Tozer and his disciples, choristers, and flock, with the great tall house, topped with an irregular steeple, which forms their church. Bishop Tozer is called the “Missional Bishop of Central Africa” and by some the “fighting parson,” for on one occasion one of the rough natives could not be spiritually appealed to until he had first felt the superiority of the Bishop’s physical strength. 1907 Holmes *The Age of Justinian and Theodora* 687 : Several prelates, whose missional activities brought over whole districts and even nationalities to their creed 1972 McGavran, ed. *The Conciliar-Evangelical Debate: The Crucial Documents, 1964–1976* (1976) 228 : The task now, however, as it seems to come up, is no longer simply one of missionary methodology but of missional theology. 1987 *Am. Baptist Quarterly* VI. 73 : The exciting missional adventure of planting new churches in an age of confused priorities offers a wonderful opportunity of calling people to the Lordship of Christ and to the newness which comes when the reign of God is recognized in our midst. 1990 Cousar *A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters* 153 : Readers are reminded of the missional context. The sufferings are not valued simply because of what Paul ex-

periences and perceives about himself . . . , but for what they mean for the outreach of the church. **1996** Matson *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts: Pattern and Interpretation* 93 : Standing in the global context of Acts 10:1–11:18 are four stories of conversion, each of which prepares for and anticipates the conversion of Cornelius. . . . They also serve to widen the geographical parameters of the church's mission in accordance with the missional program of Acts 1:8. **1996** Robert *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* 3 : The missionary men were supposed to devote themselves single-mindedly to disseminating the Gospel in preached or written form. The missionary women were expected both to assist their husbands in the primary missional responsibility of spreading the Gospel and to evangelize the women, teaching them of Christ.

2. Having to do with the programs, ministries, policies, or aims of a particular church (or denomination); having to do generally with what a church is doing.

► **1971** *Year Book of the Am. Baptist Convention* 251 : We called objective 5 “missional action.” Missional action is a new term for old phrases such as “the task of the church.” . . . Under our guidance, local congregations went at “missional action” in varied ways. **1972** *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1972* ¶826 : The aims of the Council on Ministries are: to provide a continuing means for representative lay people, clergy, and administrators to study our ever-changing missional needs, to determine priorities, and to adjust emphases between sessions of the General Conference. **1973** Theological Education Fund *Learning in Context: The Search for Innovative Patterns in Theological Education* 56 : The missional task of the Church is to serve man and honour God. By definition, Church mission implies that the Church is in action. It is in continuous actualizing process. **1975** Rosten *Religions of America* 181 : In the 1970s there are strong movements toward giving women their due place in the administrative and missional life of the church. **1976** *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1976* ¶1005 : The council shall . . . make changes in missional priorities necessitated by emergencies or by other significant developments. **1977** Lindgren, Shawchuck *Management for Your Church* 49 : Every church must answer the missional question of what it purposes to do, and every organization within the church must be clear as to why it exists and what it expects to accomplish. **1980** *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1980* ¶803(8) : Missional Priority: A missional priority is a response to a critical need in God's world which calls for The United Methodist Church's massive and sustained effort through primary attention and ordering or reordering program and budget at every level of the Church, as adopted by the General Conference or in accord with ¶1006. This need is evidenced by research or other supporting data, and the required response is beyond the capacity of any single general agency or Annual Conference. **1981** *Jet* (13 Aug.) 15 : If the United Methodist Church is to remain one of the country's most racially diverse Protestant denominations, more minority ministers must be recruited and enlisted by the church. . . . That sentiment was expressed repeatedly at a recent convention of church leaders in Kansas City, Mo., Strengthening the ethnic minority local church is the denomination's single missional priority for the 1981–84 quadrennium. **1981** Thomas *Children in the Worshipping Community* 40 : Ability to think historically, in sequence and in relationships, opens up the whole matter of church history and tradition to the older child. The church year, its festivals, and the special missional characteristics of the particular church can be understood by the child and proudly accepted. **1985** Goen *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the Am. Civil War* 46 : Denominationalism flourished as a unique produce of the American experience. . . . It was (and is) primarily purposive, or missional, operating as “a voluntary association of like-hearted and like-minded individuals, who are united on the basis of common beliefs for the purpose of accomplishing tangible and defined objectives.” **1988** Nelson, ed. *Congregations: Their Power to Form and Transform* 209 : He links regular weekly visits with the unchurched, newcomers, constituents, and members by both clergy and laity to “concrete missional objectives” and “corporate, dynamic worship” as key elements in congregations that are spiritually alive. **1989** Shockley *Campus Ministry: The Church Beyond Itself* ix : Five Missional Priorities for the Future: Evangelism as an educational task; The recovery of vocation; Education for world citizenship; Ethnic minority ministries; Issues of human sexuality. **1990** Foltz *Religious Education in the Small Membership Church* 160 : The purpose or missional objective statement tells why a church exists. **1991** Carmella *Houses of Worship and Religious Liberty: Constitutional Limits to Landmark Preservation and Architectural Review* 000 : In both functional and visual aspects, the house of worship reflects and influences all dimensions of a religious community's life—its primary theological principles, its liturgical practices, its faith renewal movements, its doctrinal development, its missional goals, and its identity. **1994** Brackney *The Baptists* 52 : In the Fundamental Baptist movement . . . pastors are

highly authoritarian, creating the total program for the congregation and completely determining the theological and missional profile of a church. **1997** Okholm *The Gospel in Black and White: Theological Resources for Racial Reconciliation* 179 : This is the text of the 1972 ministry statement of the congregation of Third Street Church of God in Washington, D.C., which has served as a missional purpose for that congregation for much of the past twenty-five years.

3. Having to do with a church's activities in serving the poor or addressing social injustice; having to do with an understanding of the church's God-given responsibilities in these areas.

See also *red-letter Christian.

► **1969** *Christianity and Crisis* (23 Jun.) 183 : The world cares little whether Christians are all together; it cries desperately for our insights into and efforts toward ending racism, imperialism, militarism and other forms of human exploitation. . . . I feel the decision [to disband the United Christian Movement] highlights the desperate need for clearly focused missional communities at the local level, communities that are truly ecumenical in their commitment to this struggle. **1978** Birch, Rasmussen *The Predicament of the Prosperous* 117 : In the Christian tradition, we have affirmed that humanity is called not only to acknowledge its sinfulness, but is also called to renewal, creativity, and reunion. The church has understood itself as a missional community called by God to help reunite broken creation. **1980** Nichols *Footsteps in the Sea* 96 : Renewed churches across the country and the world . . . are seriously addressing themselves to the task of fulfilling the missional requirements of Jesus. Wherever such churches have turned their attention toward their community and the world with need-serving compassionate ministries, there has been an enthusiastic response on the part of the people. **1982** Krass *Evangelizing Neopagan North America* 66 : If we are to be faithful to Jesus' intention, and to what the Spirit is saying to the churches in their missional involvement with the physically poor, then we have to recognize this: the gospel comes first to the actual poor. **1985** Birch *What Does the Lord Require?: The Old Testament Call to Social Witness* 76 : The community of faith when it participates in brokenness is especially judged because it is charged with the missional task of enabling and promoting justice and wholeness. The implication for the modern church is that we cannot simply point to the brokenness of the world but must confront the brokenness of our own lives and communities. **1989** Wilke *Signs and Wonders: The Mighty Work of God in the Church* 76 : Equally difficult was the missional outreach to the very poor, Spanish-speaking neighbors in the colonias. Health care needs are immense in Matamoros, so the church formed two health clinic/preaching stations. Their young doctors volunteered time, and lay pastors served the preaching points. **1998** Guder, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* 135 : The missional church is called not only to demonstrate healing among its own members but also to be a peacemaker and justice-maker in the world. **1998** Bagwell *Preaching for Giving: Proclaiming Financial Stewardship with Holy Boldness* 31 : We need to remember and affirm that many of today's finest colleges, universities, hospitals, homes for orphans and widows, retirement centers, and ministries for the poor had their origin in the missional outreach of the church. **2000** Lovin *Christian Ethics: An Essential Guide* 94 : A missional church may call for many other kinds of action too. Injustice that exploits people and puts their lives and labor at the service of masters they did not choose calls out for change, no less than the choice to serve false values and limited goals with a devotion they do not deserve. When a missional church takes action against injustice, this is also a way of proclaiming faith in God. **2001** Wiseman *And Now . . . Next Door and Down the Freeway: Developing a Missional Strategy for USA/Canada* 35 : Articles championing social justice and discussing the plight of the poor appeared in the *Herald of Holiness*. To minister among the poor was central to the missional identity of the church. **2004** Barrett, ed. *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* x : A missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God's mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and to restore it to what God has always intended for the world. **2009** Wallis *Living God's Politics* 10 : They describe themselves as a group of Christians putting “skin on the missional church.” They host presentations on various social justice topics and are always on the lookout for ways to live out their faith by caring for “the least of these.” **2009** Henard, Greenway, eds. *Evangelicals Engaging Emergent: A Discussion of the Emergent Church Movement* 235 : The definition of *missional* among some emerging churches deemphasizes the evangelistic aspect of that mission in favor of social transformation, and that change of emphasis seems to be linked to their vision of the kingdom. **2010** Stetzer, Rainer *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* 68 : Missional churches seem to speak more of unserved peoples rather than unreached peoples. As we engage to deliver justice, we must also deliver the gospel regardless of anyone's

status in a culture. **2012** Hammett, Merkle, eds. *Those Who Must Give an Account: A Study of Church Membership and Church Discipline* 190n1 : Jonathan Leeman has also challenged us to consider that many proponents of the term *missional* fill that term with objectionable meaning. He argues that some people using the term *missional* emphasize social justice in a way that fosters a new liberalism. **2013** Putman, Harrington, Coleman *DiscipleShift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* 13 : Churches in the *missional* category are sometimes referred to as social justice churches.

4. Having to do with God's mission or purposes; having to do with any of various interpretations or applications of the technical theological concept of *missio Dei* (Latin for "God's mission" or "the mission of God").

See also **missio Dei*.

► **1983** DuBose *God Who Sends* 129 : This, as we have observed, is the *missional* impulse. As impulse compels expression, the *missional* purpose comes to fruition. As our very being is constituted of the divine mission, so the full flowering of who and what we are can only come in the living out of the divine *missional* purpose. **1993** Senn *The Witness of the Worshiping Community: Liturgy and the Practice of Evangelism* 74,75 : We must clearly understand that baptism is initiation into a community which is called to participate in the mission of God. . . . Connecting baptism with the church-year calendar would reinforce its *missional* dimensions. Baptism at Epiphany would proclaim God's adoption of new sons and daughters who will be identified with the mission of his only-begotten Son. **1998** Guder, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* 222 : When we consider the structures of the *missional* church, our task is to apply the theological understandings rooted in the *missio Dei* to the church's structures. **2000** Grenz *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era* 322 : Viewed as a *missional* community, then, the church finds its central qualities in the mission of the triune God. The church's true nature as a community sent by God arises from its mandate to be the bearer of the divine mission in the world. **2004** George *Called As Partners in Christ's Service: The Practice of God's Mission* 6 : Jesus identifies himself as the "one sent by the Father." His *missional* identity is explicit and compelling: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work" (John 4:34). Jesus emphasizes his equal partnership in God's mission: "My Father is still working, and I also am working" (5:17). . . . Jesus accomplished his unique part in *missio Dei*, but God's mission is not yet completed. God is still at work in every nation of the world. **2004** Greenman, Sumner *Unwearied Praises: Exploring Christian Faith Through Classic Hymns* 145 : In recent years one popular way to maintain this distinctiveness has been to say that mission is not ours but God's, the *missio Dei*, and that the Church is inherently "missional" by nature because it reflects God's own essentially missionary nature. **2005** Gibbs, Bolger *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* 52 : I definitely see Revive as *missional*, although that's in terms of participating in the *missio Dei*. . . . It is God's mission we are participating in, and it is not something we can come up with on our own. It is about participating and cooperating with God's mission. **2006** Sanders in Bailey, ed. *Pursuing the Mission of God in Church Planting* 25 : *Missional* then, no matter what noun it is modifying, must qualify the meaning of that noun by referencing God's mission as defined by Scripture. More specifically, *missional* limits any noun that it modifies to the temporary mission task of the Church to make disciples of all *ta ethne* for God's glory and worship . . . Therefore, a local church is *missional* when it intentionally pursues God's mission for His glory among all peoples by following His patterns and His ways of expanding His kingdom. **2008** Van Gelder, ed. *The Missional Church and Denominations: Helping Congregations Develop a Missional Identity* 189 : The *missional* church movement challenges churches to look deeply and honestly into what God is up to, to imagine how we might bring the best of our gifts to that mission, and to offer our lives and our church as a living sacrifice in that mission. **2008** Driscoll, Breshears *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods* 220 : It is important to define the characteristics of a *missional* church. We propose the following eleven marks as being those that identify a *missional* church, one that is on God's mission to make disciples of all nations. **2009** Croft, Mobsby, Spellers *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Traditions* 17 : We are God's fellow-workers, God's allies in mission to the world. The word people are using to capture this idea—that we are called-out-so-we-can-be-sent-back-in—is *missional*. Sadly, it's already become a kind of buzzword in many settings. **2010** Cole *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are* 10 : These leaders are *missional*, engaged in the world as partners with God in his redemptive mission that targets all of human experience, not just church life. **2010** Mortensen, Nielsen *Walk Humbly with the Lord: Church and Mission Engaging Plurality* 108 : To be sure, the emphasis on the "missional church"

with its accompanying shift away from a narcissistic ecclesiocentrism to a focus on God's mission in the world is a healthy corrective to the Christendom tendencies of the church. **2010** Hesselgrave, Stetzer *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium* 24 : A *missional* ecclesiology is biblical, historical, contextual, praxeological (it can be translated into practice), and eschatological. With reference to the church, the term sees the church as the instrument of God's mission in God's world. **2012** Zscheile, ed. *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation* 6 : By "missional church" I mean a church whose identity lies in its participation in the triune God's mission in all of creation. **2012** Bradley *From Memory to Imagination: Reforming the Church's Music* 135 : The term *missio Dei*, "mission of God," is best used to describe the meaning of the term "missional." **2012** Keller *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* 251 : Before the term *missional* exploded throughout the Christian world, it was primarily used in mainline Protestant and ecumenical circles in a manner closely associated with the Latin phrase *missio Dei*. The phrase was originally coined to convey the teaching of Karl Barth about the action of God in the world.

5. Having to do with Christians engaging with the people of their surrounding community in order to invite them to come to church and to share the gospel with them; having to do with the ways a church is active in its community.

► **1983** Callahan *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church* 2 : "Missional" refers to the fact that in doing effective mission, the local congregation focuses on both individual as well as institutional hurts and hopes. **1987** Hopewell *Congregation: Stories and Structures* 17 : The gospel the congregation witnesses to other groups is more likely encountered in those groups' own settings than imported from our parish home. Given such a perspective, *missional* words and actions would spring . . . from the promise that God is already in Christ reconciling the world of each group . . . that our local church is privileged to approach in mission. **1989** White *The Protestant Tradition: Traditions in Transition* 151 : The original reasons for the formation of the Methodist tradition in worship were *missional*. John Wesley faced the problem of reaching unchurched masses in the new industrial and mining centers of England. **1989** Wilke *Signs and Wonders: The Mighty Work of God in the Church* 75 : Like the proverbial chicken and the egg, it's hard to say which came first, church growth or *missional* outreach. The congregation's approach to evangelism is to urge—really urge—the laypeople to invite their friends, their working associates, and their neighbors to church. **1998** Guder, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* 135 : The *missional* church works in the world to show God's love and compassion to others outside the church. God's love is too great to be kept only within the church; it has to be shared. **2001** Dean, Clark, Rahn, eds. *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry* 86 : Mark suggests that "missional" youth ministry primarily engages in evangelism, since its goal is "reaching youth for Christ." **2006** McKnight "What Is the Emerging Church?" (27 Oct.) : The central element of this *missional* praxis is that the emerging movement is not attractive in its model of the church but is instead *missional*: that is, it does not invite people to church but instead wanders into the world was the church. It asks its community "How can we help you?" instead of knocking on doors to increase membership. . . . It wants to embody a life that is other-oriented rather than self-oriented, that is community-directed rather than church-oriented. **2007** Kimball *They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations* 56,239 : I think of the Jesus who appeared to his disciples and said that they have a mission not to create an inwardly focused community and to complain about the world but rather to go out and with the power of the Spirit live *missional* lives, bringing the light of Jesus to others. . . . I know several pastors who are creating *missional* cultures in their churches, encouraging their people to befriend those who are outside the church and draw them into community with those who are following Jesus. **2007** Metzger *Consuming Jesus: Beyond Race and Class Divisions in a Consumer Church* 126 : This *missional* orientation will include greater attention to what we wear and how we relate to the community around our church if we wish to have a sacramental and salt-and-light presence in the community. **2008** Volkman *Assessing Missional Orientation: Observing Biblical Community* 70 : In practical terms, a *missional* church might seek to involve as many, or more, people to be serving out in the community as those serving inside the church walls. **2009** Wrenn *Innovative Planning: Your Church in 4-D* 54 : The *missional* movement among churches emphasizes going beyond the church walls to make disciples, meeting people where they actually are, to meet their needs with the Gospel of Christ. **2010** Stetzer, Rainer *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* 67 : One North American church's Web site recently identified their ministry as *missional*, which they proceeded to define as "reaching out to the community to invite them to come." **2011** Hirsch, Ford *Right Here, Right Now: Everyday Mission for Everyday People* 50 : The *missional* posture requires a go-to-them approach.

6. Similar to the immediately preceding sense, but this sense has the added meaning that the Christians are engaging with the people in their community by deliberately participating in the local culture.

When people use senses 6 and 7, they sometimes also figuratively refer to Christians as being “missionaries” (see *missionary 2) in their local communities and local cultures. Sometimes they even figuratively refer to their neighborhoods and workplaces as “mission fields” (see *mission field 2).

See also *missional community; *missional dating.

► **1991** Van Engen *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* 141 : In this new arena of the Church's nature we found that some “new words” better expressed what the Church is because they demonstrate what the Church is becoming in its missional calling to the world. Thus the Church emerges from its Center, Jesus Christ, moves into the world, and there finds dynamically described its marching orders for a missionary presence in the world. **1993** Westing *Create and Celebrate Your Church's Uniqueness: How to Design a Church Philosophy of Ministry* 162 : The church is in existence to penetrate the city, not to build the church. . . . Christians are trained and equipped ultimately to penetrate culture for Christ. It sees itself as a missional church where the pastor leads the congregation to make an impact on society. Church services are conducted in a more professional fashion that has the visiting unsaved person as a major focus. . . . Christian nurture would take place in services other than the Sunday morning worship service. **1999** Van Gelder, ed. *Confident Witness, Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America* 243 : I was sitting in my favorite coffee shop early Monday morning enjoying the taste of coffee, listening to the buzz of the Boomers getting their lattes before tackling the bridge to downtown Vancouver. This is my little missional context. I sit with lawyers, real estate salespersons, builders. **2006** Stetzer *Planting Missional Churches* 19 : Missional means adopting the posture of a missionary, learning and adapting to the culture around you while remaining biblically sound. Think of it this way: missional means being a missionary without ever leaving your zip code. **2006** Hsu *The Suburban Christian: Finding Spiritual Vitality in the Land of Plenty* 193 : I am still figuring out what it means to be part of the particular suburban community of Downers Grove. I have hardly begun to grasp what it means to consider myself a citizen of Chicago. But I am learning to have a wider, missional perspective on matters both local and global. **2007** Hagey *In Search of the Church* 196 : Let me try to describe a missional church. It is focused outward rather than inward, so that the Sunday gathering is not seen as the main event. It is engaging with the culture around it without being absorbed by that culture. **2008** El-Faizy *God and Country: How Evangelicals Have Become America's New Mainstream* 229 : The emergent groups . . . emphasize what they call “missional living”—mixing with the world rather than isolating themselves behind church walls. **2008** Hansen *Young, Restless, and Reformed: A Journalist's Journey With the New Calvinists* 149 : He sees great promise in the missional approach because church members share the mission to take the gospel outside church walls. Men who like softball play in city leagues. Women who like stamping join clubs. **2010** Driscoll, Breshers *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe* 354 : To be missional, a church meeting has to fit the culture it is in rather than being a subculture imported from another time or place. **2011** Frost, Hirsch *The Leap of Faith: Embracing a Theology of Risk, Adventure*, 204 : We might have inadvertently given the impression that you needed to . . . move to the darkest part of the Amazon to be missional, but we firmly believe that it takes courage to simply say yes to the requests and invitations of our neighbors. We firmly believe the mission field is in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Bangalore, India, but it's also in your next-door neighbor's shed or the local Burger King. We've seen people finding their mission field in a bar in Birmingham, England.

7. Similar to the immediately preceding sense, but this sense has the added meaning that such cross-cultural interaction is actually part of the church's core mission—that such cross-cultural interaction is part of the church's reason for existence. In addition, this sense almost always refers to cross-cultural interaction by Christians who live in Western, postmodern cultures.

People who use the term *missional* in this sense frequently point to Lesslie Newbigin (1909–1998), a missionary and *missiologist, as the originator of the various concepts as-

sociated with this sense of the term *missional*; interestingly, Newbigin never used the term *missional* in any of his books.

The term *missional* was widely popularized in 1998 with the publication of *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (see citations for 1998 and 2005b), edited by Darrell Guder and co-written by a team.

Regarding the choice of the term *missional* in that book, Guder later made these two comments: “We needed, somehow, to find a way to talk about the fundamentally missional nature of the church without using terms freighted with all kinds of baggage. By proposing the term ‘missional’ we wanted to claim the right to define what it means” (in Husbands, Treier, eds. *The Community Of The Word: Toward An Evangelical Ecclesiology* (2005) 114); “Our little group of missiologist researchers . . . wanted to find a way to summarize the implications of the classic consensus statement advanced by Vatican II in both *Lumen Gentium* and *Ad Gentes Divinitus*: ‘The church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’ By adding the suffix ‘al’ to the word ‘mission,’ we hoped to foster an understanding of the church as fundamentally and comprehensively defined by its calling and sending, its purpose to serve God's healing purposes for all the world as God's witnessing people to all the world” (in *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* XXVIII. (2009) 252).

Some commentators have suggested that the term *missional* is an attractive word choice partly because it allows Christians to talk about the church's work in the world while avoiding traditional terms such as *missions* and *missionary work* that are alleged to be encumbered by dated or simplistic understandings of the church's role in the world. See, for example, the Guder quote in the paragraph above (“freighted with all kinds of baggage”) and these comments: “The term *missional* . . . probably reflects a kind of post-colonial embarrassment about the term *missionary*, which has too often been associated with a colonial version of Christianity” (McLaren *A Generous Orthodoxy* (2005) 115,116); “The term ‘missional’ is gaining currency, and has been used in hopes of avoiding the typical reductionism associated with the adjective ‘missionary’” (Barram *Mission and Moral Reflection in Paul* (2006) 179).

See also *emerging-missional church (EMC); *emerging-missional conversation (EMC); *missional church; *missional conversation.

► **1994** Sweet *FaithQuakes* 189 : “The two men were far apart in their theology and I wondered how they got along. They were cut off from other preachers and thrown closely together. One of them said to me, ‘We get along fine. We do not talk theology. We talk cars.’” The postmodern church, if it is to be a missional church rather than an institutional church, needs to learn “car-talk.” **1994** Brownson in *International Rev. of Mission* (Jul.) 479,482,485 : Two realities are readily apparent to Christians as they examine the present situation of Christianity in its North American context. . . . We must recognize that our current crisis, in many respects, is a legacy from the enlightenment. Here the writings of Lesslie Newbigin have been formative. . . . I call the model I am developing a missional hermeneutic, because it springs from a basic observation about the New Testament: the early Christian movement that produced and canonized the New Testament was a movement with a specifically missionary character. One of the most obvious phenomena of early Christianity is the way in which the movement crossed cultural boundaries and planted itself in new places. . . . A missional hermeneutic begins with the assumption that the mode in which God is present among the faithful is irreducibly multi-cultural. **1995** Bosch *Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Culture* viii : The purpose of this series is to probe these developments from a variety of angles with a view to helping the church understand its missional responsibility to a culture in crisis. . . .

The series examines modern/postmodern culture from a missional point of view. **1998** Guder, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* 4,11 : This missional reorientation of our theology is the result of a broad biblical and theological awakening that has begun to hear the gospel in fresh ways. God's character and purpose as a sending or missionary God redefines our understanding of the Trinity. **2001** Keller "The Missional Church" (Jun.) : When he [=Newbigin] returned to England some 30 years later, he discovered that now the Western church too existed in a non-Christian society, but it had not yet adapted to its new situation. . . . The church in the West had not become completely "missional"—adapting and reformulating absolutely everything it did in worship, discipleship, community, and service—so as to be engaged with the non-Christian society around it. **2001** Jones *Postmodern Youth Ministry: Exploring Cultural Shift, Creating Holistic Connections, Cultivating Authentic Community* 70 : Being missional, learning the culture—dare I say it's what Jesus himself did? . . . Groups like the Christian Community Development Association promote the concept of "relocation" as critical to effective urban ministry and discipleship. Relocation means living in the community you serve in order to best know its people and their needs. **2001** Brewer *Postmodernism: What You Should Know and Do About It* 67 : In a "missional" context, the Church exists primarily to make disciples of its community, which necessitates personal evangelism. This must be the mission and the purpose of the local church if it strives to become a mission outpost within a postmodern society. **2002** Webber *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* 135 : "The missional church among the younger evangelicals": What I have found among the younger evangelicals is the rejection of the modern Western model of the church and its relationship to culture. **2003** Frost, Hirsch *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church* 229 : The missional church is a sent church with one of its defining values being the development of a church life and practice that is contextualized to that culture to which it believes it is sent. **2003** Webber *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community* 129 : The missional church rejects the association of Christianity with American values and the association of the church with entertainment, marketing, and corporate business models. . . . This emerging church calls for honest, authentic faith that seeks to be church in the way of a more radical discipleship. **2004** Barrett, ed. *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* x : A missional congregation let's God's mission permeate everything that the congregation does—from worship to witness, to training members for discipleship. It bridges the gap between outreach and congregational life, since, in its life together, the church is to embody God's mission. **2005** Gibbs, Bolger *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* 59 : Emerging churches take up this challenge, creating 24/7 missional communities that seek to express the kingdom in all they do. **2006** Smith *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?* 9 : Current discussions in the church—from emergent "postmodern" congregations to mainline "missional" congregations—are increasingly grappling with philosophical and theoretical questions related to postmodernity. **2007** Stetzer, Dodson *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too* 4 : In its simplest form, the term "missional" is the noun "missionary" modified to be an adjective. Missional churches do what missionaries do, regardless of the context. . . . If they do what missionaries do—study and learn language, become part of culture, proclaim the Good News, be the presence of Christ, and contextualize biblical life and church for that culture—they are missional churches. **2009** Reid *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional* 6 : The missional shift will help believers see the importance of living Great Commission lives 24/7 as opposed to thinking of church as a place. **2009** McNeal *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* 000 : We've got to take the gospel to the streets. This is the only appropriate missional response to the collapse of the church culture. . . . I am speaking of an intentional 24/7 church presence in the community, not tied to church real estate. **2009** Addison *Movements That Change the World* 30 : When we hear the word "missional" the focus tends to be on mission in a first-world postmodern context. **2010** Samson *Love Mercy: A Mother and Daughter's Journey from the American Dream to the Kingdom of God* 55 : Missional has become quite the buzzword, and there are as many definitions as there are ways to make bread. Here's mine: I look at my whole life as a mission from God. My life isn't divided between church and the real world, so everything I do ought to further the kingdom of God here on earth. It's a bit like thinking of yourself as a missionary/relief worker in your own hometown. **2010** Hesselgrave, Stetzer *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium* 24 : Following L. Newbigin and others, a church that is missional understands that God's mission calls and sends the church . . . to be a missionary church in its own society. **2010** Lawrence *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* 205 : Being missional is not the same as being committed to missions, or being missions-minded. Being missional is a way of thinking about the church. **2011** Goheen *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* 4 : At its

best, "missional" describes not a specific *activity* of the church but the very *essence* and *identity* of the church as it takes up its role in God's story in the context of its culture and participates in God's mission to the world.