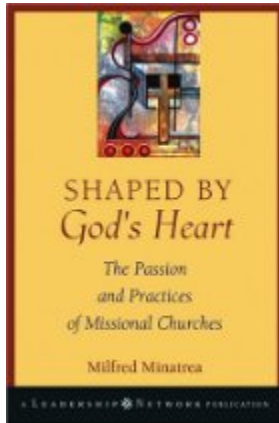


Church Health Resource Review

By Ron Cary



Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches, Milfred Minatrea, Jossey-Bass, 2004

Those who study such things tell us that healthy churches have a primary outward or missional focus and only secondarily an inward or maintenance focus. The Great Commission of our Lord seems to corroborate this idea. So does Milfred Minatrea in his book *Shaped by God's Heart*.

Minatrea was the featured presenter at our recent clergy retreat at St. Francis Retreat Center, February 9-11. There Minatrea expanded on the missional church concept and practice he advocates in his book. If you were unable to attend the retreat, get the book. It contains practical ideas for moving your congregation toward greater health by moving toward a more missional approach to ministry.

The book's appendix contains a very helpful assessment tool you can use with church leaders in one workshop or over a period of time as a teaching tool. Each main chapter is based on one of the nine missional practices found in the assessment. A leader could read the relevant chapter, share his/her learning's, and then have group members fill out and discuss the relevant assessment, applying new learning to their context.

As Regional consultant for church health I offer churches the opportunity to engage in a workshop based on mission vs. maintenance assessment. The idea behind the workshop is similar to that espoused by Minatrea, that balance between mission and maintenance is necessary. However, a growing congregation needs to increase the equipping of its members for tasks in the world rather than just tasks in the church. I would be glad to tell you more about this workshop, but you can lead your own learning experience by using the practical ideas found in Minatrea's book. For more on the book visit: http://www.missional.org/resources/amazon_store