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# Understanding and Activating Congregations: A Bibliography

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From a wide assortment of books that have implications for the congregation, we have chosen for this Bibliography those volumes that take the local church as a primary frame of reference. Books on pastoral care by clergy, the work of the laity, or the general purpose of the church in the world were not included unless a major section of their content focused clearly on the life and work of the local congregation. A few unique books were included because they have been widely used to interpret some phase of congregational life, although they were originally written with a larger field in view, for example, H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*, which provides a typology often applied to congregations.

There are three major divisions: Missional Studies, including works that advocate change in the world through the agency of the church, which itself must be changed as a more effective instrument of mission; Studies of Church Functions, works that accept the congregation as basically sound but urge that congregations improve in a particular area of congregational activity; Descriptive Research, reports on the conditions of religiousness within the congregation or the correlations between the congregation and its social context. Each area has several subdivisions. We have made sometimes difficult decisions to place books in a single category although many have implications in several.

## MISSIONAL STUDIES

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