

Resources for Congregations  
in

TRANSITION



*Newly  
Revised &  
Updated*

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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The Presbyterian Church  
in Canada



# Introduction

Congregations are central to the life and witness of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Here we worship God together and covenant to be God's people. In these "believing communities," life in Christ is formed, so that we might express it in our daily living (*Living Faith* 8.1.2). By the power of the Holy Spirit, congregations proclaim the love of God in Christ, both locally and around the world. Congregations – no matter their location, size or composition – matter!

As congregations develop over time and live out their calling, they experience a natural ebb and flow in their shape and size. We acknowledge that transitions are part of our communal life and we welcome the Spirit of God guiding us through times of change.

This annotated bibliography is designed to refer congregations and church leaders to the most up-to-date and practical resources available today to assist in times of transition in different contexts and circumstances.

Before embarking on any particular transition, congregations are encouraged to take time to assess their congregational wellness and where they are on their journey. Experience shows that this type of assessment contributes to more successful transitions. For programs and studies to help you with assessment, or for access to a member of one of the Synod Transition Teams, contact

Canadian Ministries/The Vine  
Tel. 1-800-619-7301 or 416-441-1111  
Email: [cmv@presbyterian.ca](mailto:cmv@presbyterian.ca)

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Compilation and editing of revised edition:

Gordon Haynes, Don Muir, Susan Shaffer, Tori Smit, Heather Vais

## **About resources from other denominations**

Some resources listed in this document are produced by other denominations (or are intended to apply in a broad range of denominations). Nevertheless, they can be very helpful in congregations of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. What is important to note, however, is that Presbyterian Church in Canada legislation and practice must take precedence whenever contradicted by the attitudes, approaches and practices suggested by others.

All resources listed in this document, unless otherwise stated, are available from The Book Room located at national church offices at 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7.  
[www.presbyterian.ca/bookroom](http://www.presbyterian.ca/bookroom), 1-800-619-7301, [bookroom@presbyterian.ca](mailto:bookroom@presbyterian.ca)

# Transitions

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*Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again  
and expecting different results.*

*Albert Einstein*

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Someone once said “progress is impossible without change.” This is certainly true in all of life. Change is necessary if we are going to improve. Change is also inevitable in life. We can be part of it or not; either way, everything will change over time. There are many congregations that want to experience life-giving change, but their efforts to achieve it appear to fall short. They may not know where to begin to achieve the desired change or they face resistance and never fully achieve their goals. In the end, they conclude by saying, “There’s no point. We can’t change – so we’ll have to make the best of it.” It doesn’t have to be that way! There are resources available to help congregations and leadership begin to take steps toward healthy, meaningful, life-sustaining transformation.

The resources in this section will help church leaders begin the process of thinking about change in order to guide their congregations through change. You will find resources to help congregations name their current realities, understand church life cycles and consider directions and actions to take that suit their specific needs.

***To get you started on the road to change...***

Bridges, William. ***Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change***. Cambridge, MA: Persus Books Group, 2003.

This book focuses on managing transitions in the business world, but there are applications on many levels to change in the church. Successful transition depends on much more than people embracing the need for change. It requires letting go of the old way, with all the grief this may entail, navigating the ambiguous and potentially creative time between the old way and the new, and finally, adapting to the new way. This book provides examples, theory, checklists and easy-to-follow scenarios.

***Called to Covenant: Strengthening Congregation-Presbytery Relationships***. Toronto, ON: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2004.

*Called to Covenant* is the result of church-wide consultation into strengthening the relationships between congregations and presbyteries. It examines the covenant that God has initiated with us in Christ and that places us in covenant relationship with one another. On this foundation, it explores three areas where congregations and presbyteries are most intimately involved: regular pastoral oversight of congregations and ministers by presbyteries, planning of congregational ministries, and crisis intervention by presbyteries. Of particular interest to congregations experiencing transitions:

- "Signs of Congregational Good/Poor Health" pp. 20–21
- "The Ministry of Congregational Planning" chapter 3, pp. 24–27
- "A Process for Congregational Turning Points" pp. 32–33

Available as a two-volume set from The Book Room and online at [www.presbyterian.ca/resources/online/1800](http://www.presbyterian.ca/resources/online/1800)

***Called to Covenant: Strengthening Congregation-Presbytery Relationships: Resource Book***. Toronto, ON: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2004.

This book goes hand in hand with the *Called to Covenant* resource. The following sections are particularly helpful for congregations experiencing transitions:

- "Tools for Presbyteries and Congregations in Discerning Health" pp. 31–33
- "Measuring Tool for Ministries" pp. 18–23
- "Planning Your Congregation's Future: a planning tool for congregations and presbyteries" pp. 36–60
- "Reviewing Options for Ministry and Mission" pp. 46–49
- "Life Cycles of Congregations" p. 53

Available as a two-volume set from The Book Room and online at [www.presbyterian.ca/node/1801](http://www.presbyterian.ca/node/1801)

***Congregational Awareness Studies: Four Self-Directed Studies for Church Leaders***. Toronto, ON: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2003.

The "Church Health" section of this resource (pp. 3–8) guides congregations in determining their level of congregational health as they consider a transition.

Available online at [www.presbyterian.ca/resources/online/2244](http://www.presbyterian.ca/resources/online/2244)

Cox, Harvey. ***The Future of Faith***. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2009.

Important and groundbreaking shifts are occurring in what it means to be “religious.” There is a shift away from traditional hierarchical, regional, patriarchal and institutional religion and a shift toward a religion based on community, social justice and spiritual experiences. Harvey Cox talks about this radical new change in this inspiring and transformative book.

Dale, Robert D. ***To Dream Again: How to Help Your Church Come Alive***. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004.

Reorganization plans are familiar in institutions of all kinds: change policy, change people, change programs. Each of these approaches has its advocates, but the approach this book suggests is the most basic of all – clarify purpose. When the church defines and acts on its fundamental purpose, it can find new life.

Dudley, Carl S. and Nancy T. Ammerman, ***Congregations in Transition: A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing, and Adapting in Changing Communities***. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002.

This extensive hands-on guide, geared toward urban and suburban congregations, helps congregations meet the reality and challenges of today’s constantly changing world. Written in an easy-to-follow workbook format, it combines theory, diagrams and interactive sections to engage congregational members in a practical way. This is a good resource for guiding congregations as they begin to consider a transition. It helps in analyzing and assessing changing communities and directs them in how to adapt.

Easum, Bill. ***Preaching for Church Transformation***. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010.

This book is for pastors and leaders who want to improve their missional engagement in the community by empowering congregational members on Sunday morning. This practical “how to” primer teaches pastors and congregations how to obey God, accomplish God’s mission, and change the world.

Ehrich, Tom. ***Church Wellness: A Best Practices Guide to Nurturing Healthy Congregations***. New York, NY: Church Publishing Inc., 2008.

All churches, regardless of size, seek to develop leadership and growth in numbers and spirituality. This book offers seven key factors to help congregations determine their church’s health and learn to develop healthy, vibrant congregations.

McIntosh, Gary L. ***Taking Your Church to the Next Level: What Got You Here Won’t Get You There***. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009.

If a church is on a downward trend, how can it turn around? This book looks at the impact of age and size on churches and outlines the improvements that must be made at each point for a church to remain fruitful and faithful to its mission.

***Natural Church Development: An Introduction for Churches.***

This guide gives instructions on how to do the NCD Survey and guides a church through the process of developing a strategy to improve their congregation’s health. It contains checklists for the eight quality characteristics that the survey measures and a training program for “biotic thinking.” Available online at [www.ncdcanada.com/documents/ncd-introduction-for-churches-v2-07-01-09.pdf](http://www.ncdcanada.com/documents/ncd-introduction-for-churches-v2-07-01-09.pdf)

Pappas, Anthony C., Ed Pease, Norm Faramelli. **"The Bivocational Congregation: Tomorrow's Church Congregations."** *Congregations*, The Alban Institute, Winter 2009.

This article describes how to revision and renew the church in the 21st century. It discusses how a church should be both functional and missional and provides five cases in different congregations to illustrate the qualities of a "bivocational" congregation.

Available online at [www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=7010](http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=7010)

Smith, Daniel and Mary Sellon. ***Pathway to Renewal: Practical Steps for Congregations.*** Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008.

Congregational renewal alone requires a change of heart for the whole congregation. This book offers pastors and congregational leaders a framework for understanding and addressing the deep cultural shift facing the people of a congregation during congregational renewal. This book will help leaders make sense of where their congregation could get stuck and guide them in thinking through what needs to be addressed next as a congregation seeks renewal.

Schwarz, Christian A. ***Color Your World with Natural Church Development: Experiencing All that God Has Designed You to Be (Canadian edition).*** Kelowna, BC: The Leadership Centre Willow Creek Canada, 2005.

"Natural Church Development (NCD) is a *paradigm* – a way of thinking about church growth. NCD suggests that quality (health) should precede quantity in church growth thinking. Size itself is no indicator of healthy growth. A healthy church is better able to grow through reproducing disciples, ministries and itself."

***Starting New Initiatives: A Discernment Process.*** Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

This is a very helpful resource for training elders to lead more effectively in their congregations. The introduction of this resource states, "We hope this process creates a culture where Sessions are spiritual leaders and not business managers. We know many elders feel disconnected at times between the mission of God and the work of the Session. Elders want to feel like their work on Session makes a difference in the world. We believe this resource creates the possibilities and spiritual renewal for this to happen." Available online at [www.presbygrow.net/2010/06/22/starting-new-initiatives-a-discernment-process](http://www.presbygrow.net/2010/06/22/starting-new-initiatives-a-discernment-process)

# Church Planting

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*The how of church-planting is determined by the who, where, and when of the culture.*

Ed Stetzer

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One way the Christian mission grows is through the planting of new churches. In The Presbyterian Church in Canada, presbyteries and congregations are responsible for identifying where new congregations can be formed and then taking the necessary steps to achieve their goals. But church planting also takes good leadership and a group of committed individuals to roll up their sleeves and get to work. This may seem a daunting task and there are many things to consider, but it has been done very successfully. The following resources will give you valuable insights and cautions as you embark on the unique and important ministry of starting a new church. Some resources will give you step-by-step guidelines to follow as a new church is begun, and other resources will give fresh new insights and theological implications for new church development.

Clark, Brian, Jan Edminston, Philip Lotspeich, Craig Williams. ***Starting New Churches: A Process of Discernment***, Version 2.0. Louisville, KY: PC(USA), 2009.

This step-by-step resource, produced by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), guides those considering a new church on how to seek approval from presbytery, how to create a foundational statement, a vision statement, a mission plan, and a missionary plan (people needed to fulfill the mission plan). It provides helpful timelines, biblical connections, reflections and studies for each step in the process. Available online at [www.pcusa.org/resource/starting-new-churches](http://www.pcusa.org/resource/starting-new-churches)

Compton, Stephen C. ***Rekindling the Mainline: New Life through New Churches***. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2003.

This book discusses why new churches are essential for the vitalization of the church. Compton argues that new churches reach new populations and change the nature of the denominations that plant them because the growing edge of a system is open to change.

***A Guidebook for Planting New Congregations in the United Church of Christ.***

The Church Development and Renewal Team, part of the national United Church of Christ, offers expertise in advising conferences, new churches and their pastors about planting, formation and nurture of new congregations. Available online at [www.ucc.org/newchurch/planting.html](http://www.ucc.org/newchurch/planting.html)

Hotchkiss, Dan. ***"The Post-Construction Blues."*** *Clergy Journal*, Logos Productions, March 2006.

This article guides congregations after they have just built a new church. It addresses issues such as increased operating costs and how to shift the emphasis away from money and building to ministry and program. Available online at [www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=2154](http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=2154)

Malphurs, Aubrey. ***Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal***. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.

With vision, purpose and practical advice, Aubrey Malphurs carefully walks through the six stages of a new church, including funding, creating a strong servant leadership, and establishing values. The church planters' workbook will help you in your own context, showing you how to develop a focus group, recruit a leadership team, and implement small groups.

Murray, Stuart. ***Church Planting: Laying Foundations***. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001.

*Church Planting* probes more deeply into contemporary culture and invites readers to think creatively and radically about a wide range of mission and church issues. The book sets church planting within a broader theological framework and also examines mission implications of postmodern and post-Christian societies. Murray passionately argues that church planters should establish new kinds of churches rather than merely "cloning" existing models. Nothing less will be adequate for mission in diverse and changing cultures.

Murray, Stuart. ***Planting Churches in the 21st Century: A Guide for Those Who Want Fresh Perspectives and New Ideas for Creating Congregations***. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2010.

In this book, Stuart Murray suggests that church planting isn't just about numbers – it's about the renewal of the church and the development of new ways of being the church that are biblically rooted and contextually appropriate. Murray provides stimulation and challenge to anyone who wants to see new churches come into being. But don't look here for stereotypes and ready-made blueprints; Murray's approach is open-ended and leaves ample room for personal reflection and creative responses.

***New Church Development Guidelines***. Foothills Presbytery, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

This booklet outlines the new congregational development strategy of Foothills Presbytery.

Available online at [www.pcusa.org/mgbconnect/pubs/ncd-guidelines-foothills.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/mgbconnect/pubs/ncd-guidelines-foothills.pdf)

Stetzer, Ed. ***Planting Missional Churches: Planting a Church That's Biblically Sound***. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006.

Stetzer offers the watershed instruction book for planting biblically faithful and culturally relevant churches. The "how-to" and "why" issues of church planting are here, providing practical guidance through all phases of a church plant while also taking a mission-minded look at existing and emerging cultures.

Wood, H. Stanley, ed. ***Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times: Unadorned Clay Pot Messengers***. Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006.

This is an illuminating study of the most successful pastors of new churches in seven American mainline denominations. Four expert scholars – H. Stanley Wood, Carl S. Dudley, Darrell L. Guder and Robert S. Hoyt – carefully analyze the results of a comprehensive survey of more than 700 founding pastors of new-church developments. The insights draw a blueprint for successful ministry to the unchurched in the 21st century.

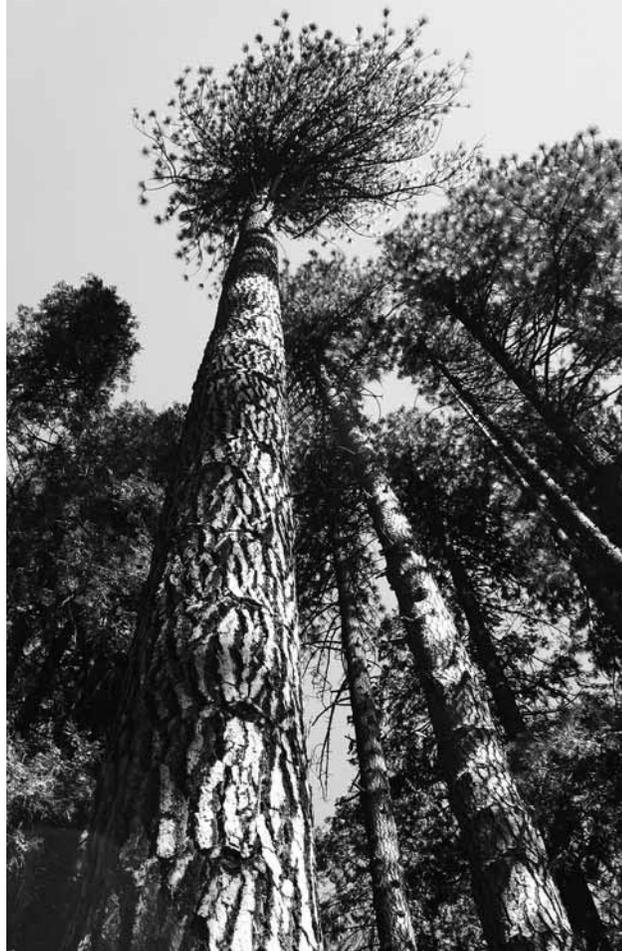
# Growth and Resizing

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One of the better ways  
to motivate Christians  
to effective evangelism  
is to persuade them  
that growth is possible  
and to show them  
how the Holy Spirit  
has caused it.

Don McGavrin

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Churches come in many different sizes. According to Arlin Rothauges, in his 1983 booklet *Sizing up a Congregation for Congregational Ministry*, there are four congregational sizes: The Family Church (fewer than 50 members); The Pastoral Church (50–150 active members); The Program Church (150–350 active members); The Corporate Church (350 or more active members). Gary McIntosh, in his 2009 book called *Taking Your Church to the Next Level*, suggests there are five sizes of church: The Relational Church (15–200 worshippers); The Managerial Church (200–400 worshippers); The Organizational Church (400–800 worshippers); The Centralized Church (800–1,500 worshippers); The Decentralized Church (1,500 plus worshippers). Churches can grow numerically in two ways – within their size category or over two categories. While spiritual growth is more important than numerical growth, numerical growth can be a sign of health and vitality in a congregation. This rarely happens on its own. It takes intentionality and planning. Sometimes it means congregations have to discard old habits, patterns and attitudes to learn a new way of ministering in the world. The following resources will shed some light on how congregations and leaders can plan transitions of church growth in their communities.

Gaede, Beth Ann. ***Size Transitions in Congregations*** (*Harvesting the Learnings Series*). Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2001.

This collection of articles by 14 key thinkers provides an in-depth and invaluable resource for congregations confronting size transitions, providing theoretical background, group exercises and practical help.

Linn, Jan G. ***Rocking the Church Membership Boat: Counting Members or Having Members Who Count***. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001.

Jan Linn challenges the way we think about church membership and proposes that congregations embrace "covenant membership," a new, more spiritual approach that calls church members to be more than names on a list. Covenant membership is based on the concept of church membership as a spiritual discipline. Linn examines the role of membership in most congregations, how it got that way, and how covenant membership can create stronger, more involved congregations.

Mann, Alice. ***The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions***. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1998.

This book addresses the hurdles and anxieties a congregation faces as they change from one size to another. Mann details the adjustments in attitude and culture, and practice and form that are necessary to support successful size change, whether growth or shrinkage. It is directed toward clergy and lay leadership of congregations of all sizes and is useful for individual reading or group discussions.

Mann, Alice. ***Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition***. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2001.

This book focuses specifically on the challenging transition from a pastoral to a program size church. It provides a five-step process enabling the learning team to engage a wider circle of congregational leaders and members in study, discernment and planning.

Mann, Alice. ***What Size Should We Be? Visioning the In-Between Church*** (VHS Video). Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2000.

Is our congregation in a size transition? What are the signs? Can our congregation cross the size barrier we are facing? Do we, in fact, have a vocation to make room for more people? Alban senior consultant Alice Mann helps congregations to recognize six possible size transitions: three resulting from growth and three resulting from contraction. The video explains what it will take to navigate the change from one size to another, why congregations choose to make the sacrifices needed to grow, and how to develop a plan for growth. Usage information included. Approximately 90 minutes in four segments.

Mead, Loren B. ***More Than Numbers: The Ways Churches Grow***. Herndon VA: The Alban Institute, 1993.

Mead explores what church growth and evangelism really mean in a time when it is mathematically impossible for every congregation to achieve significant numerical growth. He argues provocatively that spiritual, organizational, and missional growth are just as important as numerical growth, and that all four are needed for a truly healthy and growing church. Case studies and discussion questions are included.

McIntosh, Gary L. ***Beyond the First Visit: The Complete Guide to Connecting Guests to Your Church***. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006.

How do visitors see your church? Do they want to stay or run away? Church consultant Gary McIntosh offers practical advice on assessing and improving the ways in which your church attracts people, welcomes them, does follow-up, and brings them into the church family.

McIntosh, Gary L. ***One Size Doesn't Fit All: Bringing Out the Best in Any Size Church***. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming Revell, 1999.

Framed as a discussion between an experienced pastor and one just starting out, this book tackles the issues of how churches grow and how church size determines effective strategies for ministry. You'll find answers to these questions: How do churches grow? What is the church's orientation? How does change take place? How is the church structured? This book is helpful to any church that wants to grow.

McIntosh, Gary L. ***Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century***. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.

McIntosh analyzes the rationale for having multiple church staff members. He also provides pastors and church leaders with valuable tips to determine what type of staff members to add. Charts, graphs and illustrations amplify the information, going beyond theory to practical relevance.

McIntosh, Gary L. ***Taking Your Church to the Next Level: What Got You Here Won't Get You There***. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 2009.

If a church is on a downward trend, how can it turn around? This book looks at the impact of age and size on churches and outlines the improvements that must be made at each point for a church to remain fruitful and faithful to its mission.

Metz, Peter and Adam Hamilton (ed.). ***Marketing Your Church to the Community***. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007.

This short handbook helps small-member congregations who want to learn skills and techniques to market their church so others will know who they are and what they stand for. Communities are full of people who don't have a church home when there is a little church right around the corner.

Oswald, Roy M. ***How to Minister Effectively in Family, Pastoral, Program and Corporate Sized Churches***. *Action Information* Volume XVII, Number 2, March/April 1991, pages 1-7, and Number 3, May/June 1991, pages 5-7.

This resource is helpful for ministers who are moving from one size of congregation to another or a minister who is trying to lead a congregation through a size transition. It provides helpful descriptions and stories related to different church sizes from the family to the corporate church.

Available online at [www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=1214](http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=1214)

# Renewal and Development

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Behold the turtle.  
He only makes progress  
when he sticks his neck out.

James Bryant Conant,  
former president of Harvard

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One of the church's oldest Latin mottos is "*ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda.*" The English translation of this is "the church reformed and always reforming." The spirit of this motto is that the church, once reformed under the Protestant Reformation, continues in the power of the Holy Spirit to ever be reforming as God wills. In this spirit we are always seeking new ways to be the church in a world that is always changing. There are vast amounts of literature on church renewal and development theories and techniques. We have listed resources under four category headings:

- Visioning and Discernment
- Small and Large Church Development
- Multicultural Church Development
- The Emerging Church, The Missional Church and other Models

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## Visioning and Discernment

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Boyer, Keith. "**The Tipping Point – A Consultant's Perspective.**" *Potentials in Print*.

This article, written by the former Mission Consultant for The Presbyterian Church in Canada Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda, helps congregations that are seeking renewal. It refers to Malcolm Gladwell's book *The Tipping Point* and addresses the issue of why congregations resist change. Available from Canadian Ministries/TheVine.

Branson, Mark Lau. ***Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change.*** Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2004.

This book takes the reader through one church's Mission Assessment Committee work as they led the church through an Appreciative Inquiry process during a time when the church was facing major challenges in its composition and environment. Chapters 1, 4 and 5 provide the story as specific steps are explained and illustrated. Chapter 2 provides theory and an overview of steps, and chapter 3 focuses on biblical reflections related to Appreciative Inquiry. Chapter 6 and the appendices are designed for those who wish to lead other churches in AI.

Bush, Peter. *In Dying We Are Born: The Challenge and the Hope for Congregations*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2008.

This book, by a Canadian Presbyterian minister, bases its theories for renewal on the Christian theme of death and resurrection to new life. Bush gives congregations permission to give up trying to fix problems and instead proposes that sometimes we need to die to one way of being the church in order that a new way may rise. This book is helpful for congregations struggling to keep their doors open or even for those that are just struggling with their identity and vision. The book can help congregations identify if they may need to close their doors or if they need to dramatically change their ways of doing ministry.

Campbell, Dennis G. *Congregations as Learning Communities: Tools for Shaping Your Future*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2000.

Campbell introduces us to the "Learning Congregation" – a congregation that never stops learning and changing. Such congregations recognize the rapidly evolving culture around them. After looking at systems theories, Campbell then guides congregations through a series of questions about their own culture and helps them plan their responses to God's call.

Cawley, Janet R. *Who Is Our Church? Imagining Congregational Identity*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2006.

After congregations have considered their history, added up all the statistics, and tried to be honest about their core values, the question still remains: "Who are we, really?" Author Janet Cawley offers a creative, engaging and faithful way to answer just that question. Cawley demonstrates how to use a congregation's knowledge of itself to construct a metaphor of the congregation as a person and then draw on that metaphor to generate options for future mission.

Gifford, Mary Louise. *The Turnaround Church*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2009.

*The Turnaround Church* is the turnaround story of a 130-year-old once thriving congregation in the US. Mary Louise Gifford, the church's pastor, shows church leaders they have options and reason for hope. People in dying churches will find assurance that they are still a part of the body of Christ. Clergy serving these struggling churches will discover tools and resources to help them guide change. *The Turnaround Church*, while not a prescription for all churches, is a call to make long-lasting, life-sustaining changes.

Goodwin, Steven J. *Catching the Next Wave: Leadership Strategies for Turn-Around Congregations*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1999.

This book focuses on helping individuals and committees turn a declining or plateaued congregation toward health and vitality. It is a practical and concise book on how to renew a struggling congregation. It is divided into six parts:

- defining congregational health
- designing a turn-around process
- studying the congregation, the mission and the vision
- creating a vision and planning a strategy for mission
- providing leadership to act out the vision and mission
- tending the vision

A companion workbook is also available.

Mann, Alice. ***Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline***. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1999.

This book on redeveloping a struggling congregation provides practical options for congregations, leadership challenges for laity and clergy, and ways to work with denominations. Detailed and engaging questions provide a basis for congregational planning, such as: Why is your congregation in trouble now? This is a well-written and helpful resource from an American context.

McIntosh, Gary L. ***Beyond the First Visit: The Complete Guide to Connecting Guests to Your Church***. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006.

How do visitors see your church? Do they want to stay or run away? Church consultant Gary McIntosh offers practical advice on assessing and improving the ways in which your church attracts people, welcomes them, does follow-up, and brings them into the church family.

***Natural Church Development: An Introduction for Churches***.

This guide gives instructions on how to do the NCD Survey and guides a church through the process of developing a strategy to improve their congregation's health. It contains checklists for the eight quality characteristics that the survey measures and a training program for "biotic thinking." Available online at [www.ncdcanada.com/documents/ncd-introduction-for-churches-v2-07-01-09.pdf](http://www.ncdcanada.com/documents/ncd-introduction-for-churches-v2-07-01-09.pdf)

Roberts, Fredric M. ***Be Not Afraid! Building Your Church on Faith and Knowledge***. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2005.

Drawing on a study of eight mainline Protestant congregations, Roberts addresses the fears of failure that commonly beset church leaders and gives encouraging guidance on how congregations can build upon their preexisting strengths and unique gifts to be nurturing faith communities.

Robinson, Anthony B. ***Transforming Congregational Culture***. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.

Anthony Robinson provides an excellent guide to transforming the culture of mainline congregations in our postmodern world. The old can become new again with practical and workable approaches to everyday issues in the church.

Sanguin, Bruce. ***The Emerging Church: A Model for Change and a Map for Renewal***. Kelowna, BC: Copper House, 2008.

This book offers guidance to ministers and congregations seeking to shift their congregational culture toward a progressive form of Christianity. It explores what it means to be an "emerging" church and provides advice on the pitfalls and possibilities of following the vision of the emerging Christian Way.

Schnase, Robert. *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007.

Robert Schnase believes that people are looking for a church shaped and sustained by Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity. These five fundamental practices are crucial to the success of congregations. This book helps congregations develop and use these practices.

Schwarz, Christian A. *Color Your World with Natural Church Development: Experiencing All that God Has Designed You to Be (Canadian edition)*. Kelowna, BC: The Leadership Centre Willow Creek Canada, 2005.

"Natural Church Development (NCD) is a *paradigm* – a way of thinking about church growth. NCD suggests that quality (health) should precede quantity in church growth thinking. Size itself is no indicator of healthy growth. A healthy church is better able to grow through reproducing disciples, ministries and itself." See [www.ncdcanada.com/ncd-survey-primer.htm](http://www.ncdcanada.com/ncd-survey-primer.htm)

Smith, Daniel P. and Mary K. Sellon. "The Messy Work of Renewal" adapted from *Pathway to Renewal: Practical Steps for Congregations*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2008.

This article, directed toward ministers seeking to lead their congregations into renewal, spells out three phases of renewal: developing readiness, surfacing a vision, and developing and implementing strategies that move the congregation toward the envisioned future. Read the article from *Alban Weekly* online at [www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=6850](http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=6850).

**Starting New Initiatives: A Discernment Process**. Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Like the *Starting New Churches* resource for new church development, *Starting New Initiatives* is not designed as a quick fix, but rather is a process of prayer, discernment, conversation and reflection for congregations to decide how they can best minister in their particular context(s). [www.presbygrow.net/2010/06/22/starting-new-initiatives-a-discernment-process](http://www.presbygrow.net/2010/06/22/starting-new-initiatives-a-discernment-process)

Steinke, Peter L. *A Door Set Open: Grounding Change in Mission and Hope*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2010.

Peter Steinke uses his internationally renowned systems theories to offer congregations a new approach to health and vitality in a postmodern world.

Thompson, George B. Jr. *Church on the Edge of Somewhere: Ministry, Marginality, and the Future*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2007.

Thompson invites congregations to explore the meaning of being in the world but not of it – a church on the "edge of somewhere." Thompson sees a church that is deeply engaged in ministering to the community while calling on others to commit to doing the same. By analyzing the interaction between a congregation's focus of identity and their stance with the world, Thompson has created a helpful grid for congregations to place themselves on today's cultural map. Knowing where they stand now is the key for congregations to discover where they must go in the future to fully live out their call to be God's people in the world.

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## Small and Large Church Development

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Bickers, Dennis. ***The Healthy Small Church: Diagnosis and Treatment for the Big Issues.*** Kansas City, KS: Beacon Hill Press, 2005.

A healthy church is important for spiritual growth. If a church is afflicted with unhealthy issues, such as feeling of unimportance, a lack of vision, exclusivity, limited resources, or unbalanced leadership, then its health is threatened and it may eventually die. But an unhealthy church can get well and experience vital physical and spiritual growth. This book gives some helpful remedies to treat some of the issues some small-member churches experience.

Crandall, Ron. ***Turnaround Strategies for the Small Church.*** Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995.

This volume in the *Effective Church Series* focuses on how to renew a small, struggling church. It proposes turnaround strategies that focus on leadership development, evangelism and community outreach. It presents 12 key factors for turning around a congregation. It evaluates and illustrates special approaches to discipleship in churches where ethnic and cultural changes are underway.

Easum, Bill. ***Preaching for Church Transformation.*** Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010.

This book is for pastors and leaders who want to improve their missional engagement in the community by empowering congregational members on Sunday morning. This practical "how to" primer teaches pastors and congregations how to obey God, accomplish God's mission, and change the world.

Martin, Kevin E. ***The Myth of the 200 Barrier: How to Lead through Transitional Growth.*** Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005.

Growing a small church into a large church requires the transformation of the culture of the congregation. This book shows you how to lead a congregation through this type of change.

McIntosh, Gary L. ***One Size Doesn't Fit All: Bringing Out the Best in Any Size Church.*** Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming Revell, 1999.

Framed as a discussion between an experienced pastor and one just starting out, this book tackles the issues of how churches grow and how church size determines effective strategies for ministry. You'll find answers to these questions: How do churches grow? What is the church's orientation? How does change take place? How is the church structured? This book is helpful to any church that wants to grow.

Metz, Peter and Adam Hamilton (ed.). ***Marketing Your Church to the Community.*** Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007.

This short handbook helps small-member congregations who want to learn skills and techniques to market their church so others will know who they are and what they stand for. Communities are full of people who don't have a church home when there is a little church right around the corner.

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## Multicultural Church Development

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Anderson, David A. and Margarita R. Cabellon (eds). ***Multicultural Ministry Handbook: Connecting Creatively to a Diverse World***. Downersgrove, IL: IVP Books, 2010.

This book offers tips for best practices in a multicultural church community through 11 leaders sharing their own personal tips and practical ideas.

Bowers, Laurene Beth. ***Becoming a Multicultural Church***. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2007.

Instead of simply waiting for our neighbourhoods to become racially diverse, should the Christian church be a forerunner in teaching people how to relate to each other so that they can live side by side? Bowers says "yes." Indeed, she says that every church can become multicultural.

Deymaz, Mark. ***Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation***. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007.

We cannot ignore the topic of multi-ethnic churches as we live in a multi-ethnic world. Mark Deymaz writes with practical insight, not from theory but from leading an extremely strategic multi-ethnic church that is paving the way for so many others.

Kondrath, William. ***God's Tapestry: Understanding and Celebrating Differences***. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2008.

In *God's Tapestry*, Kondrath shows us how to embrace our multiculturalism – our differences of race, culture, gender, age, theology, language, sexual identity, and so forth. He does this by exploring differences on four levels – personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural. He also demonstrates a threefold process for becoming multicultural: recognizing our differences, understanding those differences and their significance and consequences, and valuing or celebrating those differences.

Liebenow, Mark R. ***And Everyone Shall Praise: Resources for Multicultural Worship***. Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1999.

This resource provides liturgies, prayers and hymns for the entire year for congregations who want their worship to reflect and include their diversity.

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## The Emergent Church, Missional Church and other Models

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Easum, Bill. ***Preaching for Church Transformation***. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010.

This book is for pastors and leaders who want to improve their missional engagement in the community by empowering congregational members on Sunday morning. This practical “how to” primer teaches pastors and congregations how to obey God, accomplish God’s mission, and change the world.

Ferguson, Dave and Jon Ferguson. ***Exponential: How You and Your Friends Can Start a Missional Church Movement***. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

With a mission statement – “Helping people find their way back to God” – brothers Jon and Dave Ferguson give insight into how to start a missional movement. It all starts with one person.

### **Fresh Expressions.**

Started by the Episcopal Church in the UK in response to declining membership, Fresh Expressions encourages new forms of church for a fast changing world, working with Christians from a variety of denominations and traditions. The initiative has resulted in hundreds of new congregations being formed alongside more traditional churches. “A fresh expression of church is a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. It will come into being through principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples. It will have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context.” — *from Fresh Expressions, UK*

Canadian Fresh Expressions resources can be found at [www.freshexpressions.ca](http://www.freshexpressions.ca) or [www.institute.wycliffecollege.ca/2008/07/fresh-expressions-of-church-an-introduction-for-canadians](http://www.institute.wycliffecollege.ca/2008/07/fresh-expressions-of-church-an-introduction-for-canadians)

Halter, Hugh and Matt Smay. ***AND: The Gathered and Scattered Church***. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

*AND*, by Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, brings you – whether you’re a mega, traditional, contemporary, or organic church leader – fresh encouragement to your ministry. By teaching you how to move beyond the attractional-missional divide and utilize insights from both perspectives, you’ll learn how to bring together the very best of the attractional and missional models for church ministry. *AND* is part of the Exponential Series.

Hirsch, Alan. ***The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church***. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007.

This is a unique examination of two of the greatest apostolic movements in history (the early church and China) and their potential impact on the Western church at the dawn of the 21st century. The book is a helpful reference for the emerging missional church.

Hirsch, Alan and Debra Hirsch. ***Untamed: Reactivating a Missional Form of Discipleship***. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001.

This radically challenging book takes a look at how to become a more authentic Christian and disciple. It takes a disciple to make a disciple. If we grow in our own walk, we can be better servants for God.

McNeal, Reggie. ***Missional Renaissance***. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009.

Becoming a truly missional church requires three things: a movement from internal focus to external focus; movement from programs to people; and movement from church-based leadership to community-engaged leadership. Reggie McNeal has much to say about these three movements that can help create new worshipping communities.

Roxburgh, Alan J. ***Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition***. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010.

In the burgeoning missional church movement, churches are seeking to become less focused on programs for members and more oriented toward outreach to people who are not already in church. This fundamental shift in what a congregation is and does and thinks is challenging for leaders and congregants. Using the metaphor of map-making, the book explains the perspective and skills needed to lead congregations and denominations in a time of radical change over unfamiliar terrain as churches change their focus from internal to external.

Surratt, Geoff, Greg Ligon and Warren Bird. ***The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church...in Many Locations***. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

Drawing from the examples of churches nationwide, this resource shows what healthy multi-site churches look like and what motivates congregations to make the change. Discover how your church can:

- a) cast a vision for change
- b) ensure a successful DNA transfer (vision and core values) to its new site
- c) develop new leaders
- d) fund new sites
- e) adapt to structure and staffing change
- f) use technology to support your worship services

You'll identify the reasons why churches succeed and how they overcome common snags. The resource also offers specific action steps and self-diagnostic tools.

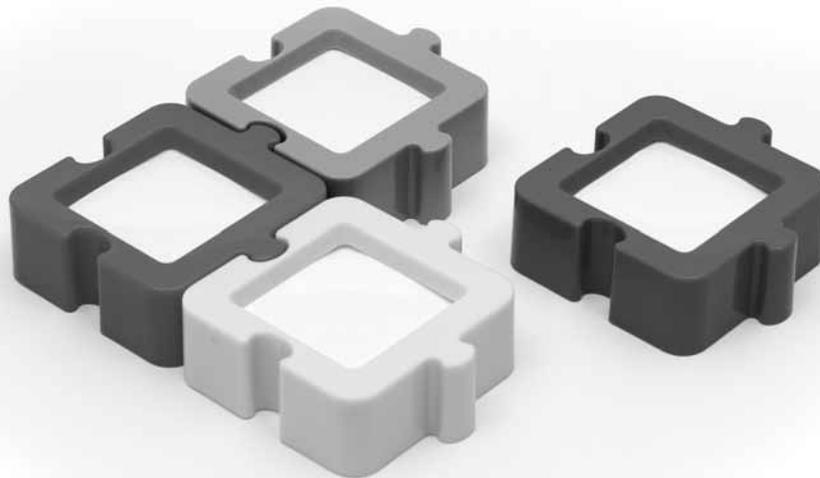
# Clustering and Amalgamating

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*A snowflake is one of God's most fragile creations,  
but look what they can do when they stick together!*

*Author Unknown*

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**M**any congregations across Canada are finding themselves in difficult situations. Changes in community demographics, shrinking membership rolls and rising building expenses have led some congregations into a state of “survival mode.” Other congregations have responded to these same challenges by forming clusters, multiple-point congregations, or merged or amalgamated congregations. They understand that such reconfiguration of their congregation is *not* a sign of failure. On the contrary, it is good stewardship that releases resources for life-changing ministry.

The following resources can help congregations find new options and a new future.

Brenner, Harvey M. ***Merging Congregations: The Exploration, Facilitation and Execution of a Synagogue Merger, and the Role of the Administrator/Executive Director in the Process.*** Warren, NJ: Temple Har Shalom, 2008.

Based on the Jewish tradition, this resource provides biblical (Old Testament) guidance for congregations considering clustering. It combines theoretical and practical direction that can be adapted to our Presbyterian system of governance.

Hughes, Dennis J. ***“Two Times Two Equals Two.” Perspectives: An online publication of the Office of the General Assembly, PC(USA), August 2008.***

This article tells the story of two congregations that merged in the Seattle area. Available online at [www.pcusa.org/oga/perspectives/jun07/two.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/oga/perspectives/jun07/two.pdf)

Mann, Alice. Interview about merging congregations, May 2009. Available online at [www.blogtopsites.com/outpost/3ba90c133f09239e10617232be998a9f](http://www.blogtopsites.com/outpost/3ba90c133f09239e10617232be998a9f)

Prince, Dick. **"Amalgamation Began with Vision."** *Potentials in Print*, October 1998, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp 3–4.

This is the story of two congregations that amalgamated to develop a completely new ministry. Available from Canadian Ministries/TheVine.

Waldkoenig, Gilson A. C. and William O. Avery. ***Cooperating Congregations: Portraits of Mission Strategies***. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2000.

Transitioning communities are challenging congregations to develop unique, creative strategies for remaining open for ministry. This book is based on an intensive study of five cooperative ministry ventures.

Yanagihara, Mariko. ***And the Two Shall Become One: A Resource on Church Mergers***. Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2008.

This is a guiding resource put out by PC(USA) for churches that are considering or going through a merging of congregations. It asks pertinent questions that will direct sessions and congregations as they make decisions on whether or not to merge and how to do it.

Available online at

[www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/smallchurch/pdfs/churchmerger.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/smallchurch/pdfs/churchmerger.pdf)

Yarrow, Luann. ***And the Two Shall Become One***. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2009.

This resource is an interview with Alice Mann, encouraging congregations to look at all their options before deciding that a merger would be beneficial. She cites four areas of readiness that a congregation should consider before deciding on a course of action.

Available from Canadian Ministries/The Vine

***Guidelines for the Dissolution or Amalgamation of Congregations***. Toronto, ON: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2009.

This helpful resource, by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, guides presbyteries and congregations through dissolution or amalgamation of congregations. It is divided into three parts:

- the theories of each option and how to determine which choice is most suitable for a particular congregation
- the practical steps in the dissolution of a congregation
- the practical steps in an amalgamation process

Available from Barbara Nawratil, Financial Services of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. [bnawratil@presbyterian.ca](mailto:bnawratil@presbyterian.ca), 1-800-619-7301 ext. 320

# Closing a Church: Dissolving a Congregation

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*We are not human beings  
on a spiritual journey.  
We are spiritual beings  
on a human journey.*

*Stephen Covey*

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**T**he circumstances leading up to the decision to close a church can be many and varied. The dissolving of a congregation is usually facilitated by the presbytery in which a church is located, but the congregation is always involved in the decision-making process. Some churches realize that they must close because the burden of taking care of an aging building is too difficult for a congregation with few members. While the decision is a difficult one, everyone agrees this is what needs to be done. Other churches facing closure are very much divided and the loss of their church building and community stirs up great feelings of grief, remorse and even anger. For some, the closing of a church is a sign of great failure; for others, the closing of a church provides new opportunities to imagine how God might be working in a community in new ways. Whatever the reason or how it affects a community, closing a church is not an easy or uncomplicated journey. The following resources may help shed some light and give some tools and ideas to help leaders and congregations in this particularly difficult time of transition.

Gaede, Beth Ann (ed.). ***Ending with Hope: A Resource for Closing Congregations.*** Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2002.

*Ending with Hope* grows out of the understanding that although closing a congregation is in many ways about dying, it can also be about new life. Closing a congregation does not have to be about failure but can be about redirecting resources for new ministry.

Hilliard, Linda and Gretchen Switzer. ***Finishing with Grace: A Guide to Selling, Merging, or Closing Your Church.*** Booklocker.com Inc., 2010.

Thousands of churches close yearly, affecting tens of thousands of the faithful. Reasons for church closures run from aging congregations to conflict, from dwindling funds to pastoral betrayal. *Finishing with Grace* is written as a guide to churches that are making major transitions in their lives. These communities are faced with heart-rending decisions and profound change. This book provides guidance and support for any congregation considering selling their building, merging with another congregation or concluding their ministry completely.

Jones, Michael K. ***Empty Houses: A Pastoral Approach to Congregational Closures.*** Charleston, SC: Booksurge, 2004.

This book is a personal account of the author's experience bringing a church through closure. Jones takes a very practical approach to some heavy matters and offers advice as well as some cautions.

***Guidelines for the Dissolution or Amalgamation of Congregations.*** Toronto, ON: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2009.

This helpful resource, by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, guides presbyteries and congregations through dissolution or amalgamation of congregations. It is divided into three parts:

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Available from Barbara Nawratil, Financial Services of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. [bnawratil@presbyterian.ca](mailto:bnawratil@presbyterian.ca), 1-800-619-7301 ext. 320

## **Liturgies for closing a church:**

**"The Dissolution of a Congregation,"** *The Book of Common Worship*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1991, p. 436.

### **Liturgy for the Closing of a Church.**

Available online at [www.united-church.ca/files/planning/theme/worship\\_closure.pdf](http://www.united-church.ca/files/planning/theme/worship_closure.pdf)

### ***Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for the United Church of Canada.***

Toronto, ON: United Church Publishing House, 2000, pp 706-709.

## For Further Assistance:

For a Transition Team in your area, or for assistance in any congregational transition, contact Canadian Ministries/TheVine at 1-800-619-7301 or 416-441-1111.

If you know of any resource not listed in this booklet that you have found helpful, please contact Canadian Ministries/The Vine at [cmv@presbyterian.ca](mailto:cmv@presbyterian.ca) with the title and a brief description, or call us at 1-800-619-7301 x 289.

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50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7  
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