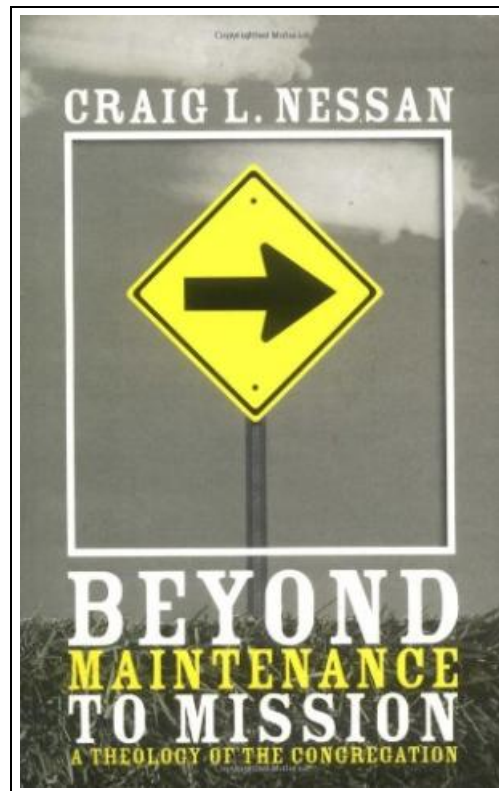


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Fortress Press, 1999. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Fortress Press 1999 New/ Editorial Reviews About the Author Craig L. Nesson is a Lutheran pastor who earned his doctorate at the University of Munich. He is currently on the faculty of Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, as Assistant Professor of Contextual Theology. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. The title of a recent by Wendell Berry asks the basic but penetrating question: 'What are people for' By posing this fundamental query, Berry intends to probe the misdirection of farm policy in the United States since World War II. The operating assumption, that there are too many people working in agriculture, has shredded the fabric of rural life. This poses an equally basic and penetrating question regarding church life in the United States at the close of the twentieth century: 'What are congregations for' It may be that we have grown so accustomed to the routine of congregational life that we have stopped asking this question. Relying on established patterns, we delude ourselves into believing we are providing clear theological vision and faithful leader. Thus we succumb to what Karl Hommen refers to as 'the peril of ordinary days.' Although there may be security in treading familiar roads, the situation in which the church finds itself at the dawn of a new century calls for a renewal of vision about how God seeks to engage Christian congregations. When congregational leaders cease struggling with this question---the question of God's purposes for the local congregation---a myriad of other priorities arise to divert us from this most central concern. Congregations exist for the sake of mission. This fundamental truth about the church is easily set aside in favor of what appear to be more urgent agendas. Chief among these in this age of diminishing resources is...

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