

EQUIP

PRACTICAL WAYS
TO TRAIN
MISSIONAL LEADERS



MyVerge

my.vergenetwork.org

EQUIP

Practical Ways To Train Missional Leaders

Cultivating Ordinary Revolutionaries

ROB WEGNER

Reach, Restore & Reproduce Leaders

DAVE FERGUSON

Missional People, Missional Leaders

LANCE FORD

Modeling Mission

HUGH HALTER

Apprenticing Leaders

REGGIE MCNEAL

Training To Release

MATT CARTER

Transformational Leadership

JASON DUKES

Process, Not Program

JR WOODWARD

**This resource is
brought to you by**



www.VergeNetwork.org

CULTIVATING ORDINARY REVOLUTIONARIES

ROB WEGNER

Not The Typical Approach

The way we've come at this was, first, through missional communities in India. We've been a part of an indigenous church-planting movement there for about 10 years, and it's not the typical approach.

We've actually been directly involved in training the indigenous leaders, and most of the churches are what many people would call missional communities. They're groups of 20, 30, 40, or 50 people, each reaching unique pockets of people or unique people groups. But what's unique about it is they're actually small and reproducing.

We've developed a 15-month coaching process. The first level of training is called the *Kingdom of God* training. It basically walks them through five modules of training. They gather in batches of about 30 - similar to an intensive training for 2 to 3 days - and it takes them through the startup of a missional community.

Missional-Incarnational Focus

It starts with a focus on being missional-incarnational – identifying the pocket of people you are called to – and then we do what we call *relational mapping*. We have them sit down and say, “Okay, let’s write down everything you do in a month. Alright, now I want you to assign a name to that.”

So suddenly they have a map of the people they are actually doing life with. We help them see that, “This is your church. Now, these are the people that you need to start discipling.”

Then, they go from that missional-incarnational focus to disciple-making. This is a layered approach that is a practitioner-based model, where each one of these batches is led by a trainer and a coach who has successfully led a missional community. Then, they stay in touch with the folks in their coaching batch every week. So there are intensives, then there is weekly coaching, and you don’t move on unless you are actually implementing the first one.

And it is not like, “Did I get the information, and can I pass the test?” It’s like, “No, you’re actually living it. And if you’re not, you don’t go on.”

Reproduction is Maturity

Basically, we have taken a similar model, and we’re doing that back here at home. So each missional-community person is an ordinary revolutionary here at GCC who will receive ongoing training. Among our over 1,000 churches planted with 120,000 people in it, we have an application process where folks are coming in at such a high quality of disciples that virtually no one drops out.

The training is tri-perspectival, focusing on the head, the heart, and the hands. So it is a combination, training in theology, practical skills, and character formation. We're employing the same kind of coaching model, so that training is in small batches of 15 to 30 leaders at a time, over a process of 12 to 15 months.

We have regular meetings with occasional overnight intensives. And with each batch, we're raising up new coaches and new trainers. So, from day one you're telling everyone, "Hey, you're going to be the coach. In fact, you're coaching somebody right now. So go!" So the expectation is reproduction. Reproducing is maturity.

I grew up in a church that was definitely the information-transfer deal. Discipleship was me sitting in a class, filling out notes, having a little binder. Don't get me wrong - I'm grateful for the sheer amount of knowledge the church I grew up in transferred to me, but in high school, I encountered a real disciple-making model.

Our pastor was assigned to "receive the kids." So he really reformatted the whole youth ministry around life-on-life disciple-making that was obedience-based.

He got me hooked up with this guy named Brad, who used to be in gangs and sold drugs, and then he met Jesus, and he just flat out loved Jesus like no one I'd ever met. I remember the first time I prayed with this guy, he kept on praying, and it was the first time I had any experience with the palpable presence of God.

I grew up in church, prayed thousands of prayers, but this guy kept on praying, and I was like, “I don’t think I know how to pray.”

Things just happened that I’d never experienced before, and he just did life with me – he taught me how to pray, how to study the Bible, how to be a man of integrity. So, I had this experience in high school that is very rare and shaped how I began to see and model discipleship. This is the model we’re trying to implement with our leaders.



***Rob Wegner** serves as a teaching pastor at Granger Community Church, calling the people of God to get out of their seat and into the Story. Under his leadership, Granger has seen thousands move out on mission, culminating in redemptive movements locally and globally, that include expressions like Monroe Circle Community Center, a hub for neighborhood renewal in the inner city, and a movement of over 1000 reproducing churches in India. His first book, *Share the Well*, which he co-wrote with his wife, Michelle, is an eyes wide open experience through visually stunning photos and captivating stories of the holistic church planting movement they helped birth in India. Rob and Michelle have three girls - Madeline, Whitney, and Belle who are quickly becoming Kingdom revolutionaries. Rob blogs at www.robwegner.org. Twitter: @robwegner.*



REACH, RESTORE, & REPRODUCE LEADERS

DAVE FERGUSON

When my brother Jon and I, along with a few friends from college, started COMMUNITY our mission was clear: “Helping people find their way back to God.” Our strategy was also clear - before we would ever have a celebration service each of us would build relationships with people far from God and invite them to do life with us in small groups. My first small group apprentice was Jerry, a friend of mine who was not a believer. In time Jerry became a Christ follower and I got to baptize him.

Those initial small groups were composed of people who were all a part of a community with a cause; they were on mission. Several years later our small groups at COMMUNITY have continued to be open, evangelistic and reproducing groups. Last year we baptized over 400 people and most of those people came to faith in a small group and were baptized by a friend in their group.

Simple, yet daunting

I often tell pastors that transitioning small groups to missional communities is really quite simple, but can also be one of your most daunting tasks. This is due to the nature of most small

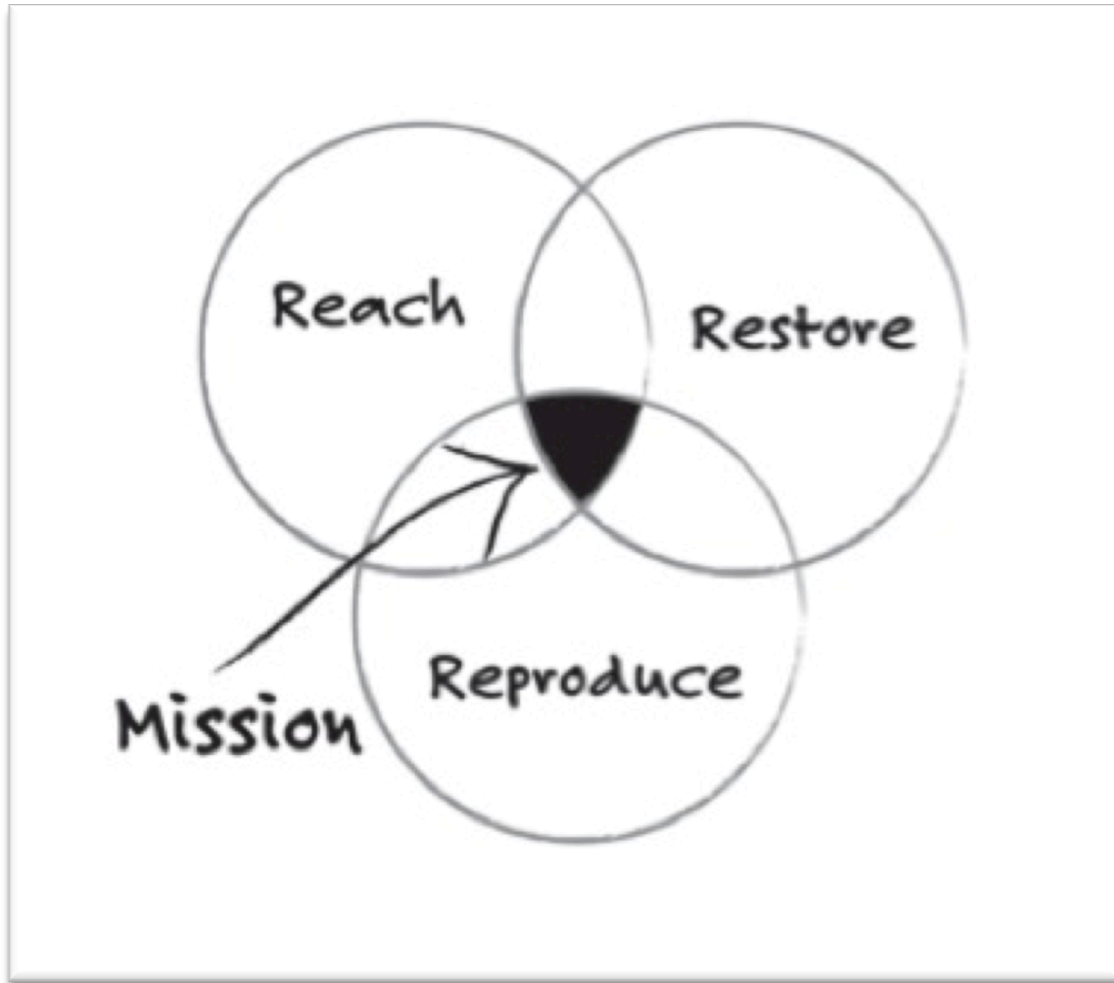
groups – they’ve become accustomed to spending *most* of their time hanging out with other Christians learning about the Bible – equating knowledge of God to discipleship.

While there is much about our group life that is missional, we began to notice that many of the people in the groups were not on mission. Less than 50% of the people at COMMUNITY had an identified mission. Some of the groups were relying entirely on newcomers at one of our campuses to fill their groups. And very few groups had a clearly defined mission. This had to change.

We wanted every person on mission and every group to have a mission. This drift in small group life along with conversations I was having through Future Travelers caused us to re-think our definition of mission and to re-think small groups as a missional strategy.

Re-thinking Missional

In re-thinking our small group strategy we were very much aware that “missional” had become a buzz-word within church leadership circles. “Missional” often meant whatever it was that that particular leader was enthusiastic about. We wanted a comprehensive but simple explanation of the mission of Jesus. Over the course of about 18 months we concluded that the mission of Jesus could be summarized using the following three words: reach, restore and reproduce.



Reach - Jesus gave us the great commission and asked us to reach the world and help all people find their way back to God.

Restore - Jesus wants to restore his Kingdom and asked us to represent God to a hurting world and bring about restorative justice.

Reproduce – Jesus’ vision for accomplishing his mission would only occur through a movement of Christ followers who are living to reach and restore this world but also reproducing that in others.

With this comprehensive and simple understanding of mission we were now ready to re-think how to engage people in mission through small groups.

Re-thinking Small Groups

Many churches that are “going missional” have started calling their small groups “missional communities.” We considered that, but we knew a simple name change would not change their identity or their behavior. Mission is the goal, not a name change. For us it was too easy to issue a name change; instead we are challenging every small group to covenant to be one of two types of groups:

Group with a mission - these groups have a common cause as their affinity and they covenant to all be about the accomplishment of that mission.

Group with missionaries - these groups have a relational affinity and they covenant to hold each other accountable for the individual mission that God has called them to.

It is our intention that every person will present to his or her group a covenant to be on mission. It is also our intention that every group will present to their campus a covenant to be on mission.

COMMUNITY has grown from a few college friends to thousands of Christ followers at twelve campuses and a network of new churches that includes tens of thousands of people. We are grateful for all that God has done through us,

but we now believe that he is calling us to mobilize every one of those people for mission, not just 50%.

It is our goal and belief that in the coming year the number of people on mission will be 100% of our weekend celebration service attendance. And the way we are doing it is through groups with a mission or groups of missionaries. Some people call those “missional communities.”

Training Missional Leaders

“How do you train missional leaders?” is a huge and really, really important question right now. First, I think we have to understand that part of being missional is thinking movemental. If we miss that, we’ll be on mission but we won’t accomplish the mission.

What we’re trying to do at Community is give people a clear understanding of what it means to be missional. Here’s how we describe missional:

If you think about a Venn diagram – three circles that all intersect – you have one point in the middle where everything comes together. In the three different circles, we have three different words. In the first circle, we’d put the word *reach*. In the second circle, we’d put the word *restore*. In the last circle, we’d put the word *reproduce*. Where these three intersect, we’d say you have mission. The piece I think that gets left out of the conversation is that a lot of people use *missional* for whatever thing they happen to be really jazzed about.

I probably did this when we first started Community, because I would have said, “No, we’re totally on mission!” We were, but

there were parts we were missing. For me, it would have been about evangelism. I want to see lost people found, so that's what it meant to be on mission.

From the ground up

Well, then a young lady named Kirsten Strand joined our church. Her gifts were more in mercy. She began to help me see that, you know what, if we're going to really be like Jesus and be on mission with Jesus, then it's really about restoring people and whole communities to God's original intent. So then we had the *reach* and the *restore* pieces, but the part I think I see still being left out of a lot of places is this last part of *reproducing*.

After a while, she and her husband really felt a call to the poor, so he quit his corporate job, and went back to school. They relocated from one of our affluent suburbs in Chicago to a pretty tough, under-resourced community, and he started teaching in the school systems.

Fast-forward a few years, and we have a ministry center in that neighborhood now. We have partnerships with six elementary schools and two of the junior highs. We actually started a bilingual campus in that neighborhood. Kirsten and her family not only did this, but she also brought alongside her another guy named Bob who had to learn from her.

Bob got what she was doing and now he's gone to another community, another suburb of Chicago, which is also a kind of under-resourced community, and he is doing the same thing. If Kirsten would have just said, "No, I'm just about this" and

didn't bring someone alongside her, it's a one-and-done. There is no movement.

Discipleship equals apprenticeship

What we have to get is the whole idea of discipleship really is *apprenticeship*. So with every one of our missional communities, every one of even our church planters at every level, we need to have people who are thinking about, *How do I bring someone alongside me and apprentice them in the things I'm being taught and Jesus is teaching me?* If we will do that along with the restoration and the reaching, I think then you get a full expression of what it really means to be on mission.

////////////////////////////////////
Dave Ferguson and four friends from college launched Community Christian Church, a church that is passionate about "helping people find their way back to God". Dave serves as a resource for other churches and leaders seeking to expand through multiple church sites and provides visionary leadership for the NewThing Network, a catalyst for a movement of reproducing churches. Dave is the co-author of *The Big Idea: Focus the Message, Multiply the Impact, Exponential: How you and your friends can start a missional church movement* and *On the Verge: The Future of the Church as Apostolic Movement*, all with Zondervan.. Twitter: [@daveferguson](https://twitter.com/daveferguson).

////////////////////////////////////

MISSIONAL PEOPLE, MISSIONAL LEADERS

LANCE FORD

In training leaders of missional communities our approach is to go easy on the leader-speak while concentrating on the “follower”-posture of being a good news or, gospel person. We want to help potential leaders carve their doing out of their being. This eliminates undo pressure and distraction on periphery issues and brings a concentration on the *walking with Jesus* centrality that is so vital to missional living.

Modeling for others

A leader must first live missionally before he or she can lead missionally in an authentic way. We want to develop followable leaders who will develop a lineage of *followable* leaders. Specifically we want to help missional community leaders develop a seamless rhythm of mission in his or her own life.

Beginning with *Spiritual Formation* as a basis, we help them develop a hearing ear and space in their daily life to actually hear from God, and to expect to hear from God. This is essential. If a person is not taking her cues from the Holy Spirit

as she goes through her day then she will not be able to respond in natural ways.

Otherwise she is only a candidate for outreach events and programs; which is not what we mean when we speak of a missional church. It takes missional people - who are living on mission - to be a missional church.

Common Community

Redefining fellowship and brotherhood is at the basis of *Common Community*; the second necessary sphere of missional community leader training. Otherly-

living is not easy for any of us. It doesn't come naturally; especially for individualistic Westerners. The beauty of biblical hospitality, sharing, and genuine familial concern and action is essential for genuine missional communities to come into being.

“We must address issues of consumerism, individualism and risk into the equation of our training in order to develop missional communities.”

I can't say I have ever heard the attractional/missional debate bring up genuine New Testament community as having the greatest potential for attractiveness to a watching world. But for the infant church in the early centuries the authentic love and sacrificial sharing of the believing community was a shining beacon to non-believers that there was something totally different about these people (Christians). We must address issues of consumerism, individualism and risk into the equation of our training in order to develop missional communities.

The Third Sphere

For us, *Missional Living* is a third sphere of discipleship that authenticates our lives as followers of Jesus. We must train missional community leaders to live with the eyes of a missionary.

The *sent (missio)* nature of a disciple involves moving throughout our day looking and listening for redemptive opportunities. A variety of situations, some seeming to be big, others appearing to be small, present themselves as opportunities to exercise our missional muscles as the *sent* people of God.

The key is to live with eyes and ears open to what the Holy Spirit says as you go through your day. This is where the spiritual formation component is so vital, as the foundation for our daily lives. An integrated rhythm of missional posture is not a linear set of steps. It is more like a dance. A dance of life with God as our leading partner.

Lance Ford is a National Team leader with Forge America and Missional Strategist for the Mid America District of The Christian & Missionary Alliance. With over 20 years of experience as a pastor and church planter, Lance is a writer, coach, and consultant who has designed unique training systems currently being used by networks, seminaries, and leaders throughout the world. Lance and his wife recently moved to Kansas City to establish a network of missional communities, called KC

SENTral. His passion is to give himself to resourcing and equipping churches and leaders anywhere and everywhere as they develop missional lifestyles. He co-authored the book, Right Here Right Now: Everyday Mission for Everyday People, with Alan Hirsch. Twitter: [@lanceford](#).



MODELING MISSION

HUGH HALTER

Action Day

We just say the old saying, "What you draw people with is what you draw people to." So if you want your leaders eventually to be on mission, you start mission week one. So one of the tools we use is this TK Primer, which is basically an eight-week "Dip Your Toe Into the Missional, Incarnational Community Experience".

Every week, there's an action day. They actually have to go do some cross-cultural ministry, and we teach them how to feel their way to what it means to be incarnational. So, for us, even in our own church, it's got to be a practical, active experience that moves them into mission together. We're finding that if you just do bible studies on what it means to be missional, you don't really move people. You just increase their concept idea about it.

So, we're trying to do what we think Jesus did, and that's that he got them active and then he would reflect with them later. Their spiritual growth was based on doing something instead of just learning about something.

Training Leaders

The first line of training is to actually model the behavior. So, within our church here and, what we help other churches do is to identify some existing leaders you have in your church that tend to be on the more incarnational end. They're probably really good with people outside the church; they have some gifting in hospitality; they have the ability to have a whole host of different types of people in their home; and they can model and integrate an environment. So that's where we start.

That's a dilemma because a lot of pastors have grown up in Bible school and seminary and have honestly admitted that they don't really know how to relate with people. If that's the case in an existing church, we ask the pastor to go on the mission with the people, not as a leader but just to say, "Hey, I'm going to try and learn this too." As long as that leader is in the process, and as long as they don't act like they're the experts, they can still influence their people.

The second thing we do is we get all of our leaders together, and we constantly talk about what it means to actually lead a missional community. So, just like you're training a small community to go overseas on mission, we actually take the same approach here locally, within our existing church.

We try to give our best training and time to our leaders. Sometimes we're teaching them pastoral gifting. Sometimes we're teaching them issues about how to engage culture. A lot of times we're processing through the formation of community. What's that look like? What's that feel like? I think the modeling and drawing people into the experience is always the

best way of leadership as opposed to a cognitive training and then send them off, “God bless you,” type of idea.



***Hugh Halter** is the national director of Missio, serving as a mentor to a global network of missional leaders and church planters. He is lead architect of Adullam, a congregational network of missional communities in Denver, Colorado, and is the coauthor of *The Tangible Kingdom* with Matt Smay. Twitter: [@hughhalter](#).*



APPRENTICING LEADERS

REGGIE MCNEAL

The Importance of Apprenticing

The single biggest theme in training is apprenticing so that people do it, and then they learn from it. In some cases, they're actually assigned coaches who are very serious and almost formalized in their debriefing processes. Every missional community system that I'm in touch with is always scouring, looking, for the next wave of leaders. They emerge from inside the missional community. Then, they're apprenticed by the existing leader.

Gathering Leaders

I also find that almost all these systems have some kind of very pointed leadership gatherings, whether it's once a quarter or once a month or three times a year. There will be some kind of convening of the leaders to celebrate the work, do peer-to-peer sharing and mentoring, and then again some intentional coaching.

Depending on the network, there will be some front-end, kind of curricular type of introduction so the key issues leaders are going to face will be addressed before they're deployed. Maybe that's done alongside this apprenticing model so that it's introduced, and then their *newer* leader is given material to read to process with the existing community leader.

Spiritual Formation

Finally, a major theme of all the training is the personal, spiritual formation of a leader. One of the real limits of the typical program church model would be that we tend to train for tasks, so we teach elders to *eld* and teachers to teach and deacons to *deac* and ushers to *ush*, that kind of thing, but there's not necessarily an attention to the leader who is doing the leadership.

A very huge differential for me in the missional community piece is to start with the leader (that's always key) and the spiritual formation of the leader, because this leadership in missional community is lived out in community and on the ground and in full view. It's not a *positional* leadership; it's a *personal* leadership. Any leadership training that doesn't address that, of course, is just not conceivable in the missional community world.

Reggie McNeal is the Missional Leadership Specialist for Leadership Network of Dallas, TX. He has lectured or taught as adjunct faculty for multiple seminaries, including Fuller Theological (Pasadena, CA), Southwestern Baptist (Ft. Worth, TX), Golden Gate Baptist (San Francisco, CA), Trinity Divinity School (Deerfield, IL), and Columbia International (Columbia, SC). In addition, he has served as a consultant to local church, denomination, and para-church leadership teams, as well as seminar developer and presenter for thousands of church leaders across North America. Twitter: [@reggiemcneal](https://twitter.com/reggiemcneal).

TRAINING TO RELEASE

MATT CARTER

From Community Groups to Missional Communities

Before, we had what was called community groups. The idea behind community groups was that they were these little small groups that met for Bible study. They had some chips and some dips. And we called this community – a small group Bible studies with some chips and some dips thrown in. That was a big win for us.

But we began to think differently. What if we challenged, trained and equipped our leaders, who would then in turn train, challenge and equip all our small groups not just to come together on a Tuesday night, eat some snacks, have a Bible study, pray and go home (all that stuff is cool)? What if we challenged them not just to do that, but to come together for the purpose of living radically on mission together?

What if we challenged them to come together for the purpose of being the church? What if we challenged them to come together for the purpose of living missionally and living incarnationally together as a group in their neighborhoods, in their workplaces, on their campuses? What would happen if we did that? We might actually make a difference in Austin, Texas in our lifetime.

Growing Restlessness in the American Church

There's a growing sense of restlessness that I'm seeing in the American church. When my parents went to church, which was every single Sunday of my young life, here's what their church experience looked like: We would go to the Sunday event. They tithed. They would serve in the nursery once a month. My dad was an usher sometimes, and, about once a month, he'd pass the offering plate. We prayed before meals. My parents would have a couple of quiet times a week.

That was it. That was their definition of Christianity. That was their Christian experience, because in their minds there was a group of people who did the ministry. These were the pastors and the teachers and the evangelists and the missionaries and the music guys. Then there were the people like them who sat in the pews and got fed by the professional Christians who did the ministry.

However, this generation – the 18- to 30-year-olds who are coming of age in the church today – they are not wired that way. This generation is not okay with sitting on the sidelines of ministry. They are hardwired to want to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

They are not afraid of challenge. They're not afraid of getting outside of their comfort zone. They want to experience life for themselves. They want to see the world change, and they want to be a part of it. The reason this generation is leaving the church in droves right now in this country is because the vast majority of churches in this country haven't figured that out.

Expect Great Things from People

People in church right now, the people God is going to bring to future churches, are capable of doing more than you have ever dreamed they can do if you will just challenge them and give them the chance to do it.

They're capable because the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is sitting in that single mom. The power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is sitting in that young married couple. The power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is sitting in that 65-year-old guy who has wasted his life making money for himself. Release people and raise the bar for what it means to live on mission.

As we as a church began to cast this vision for Missional Communities, for groups not just to gather but to live on mission together in the context that God has called them to, we've had people respond that want to make a difference for the kingdom. They have raised their hands and said, "I want to get in the fight."

One family in particular sold their home and moved into an at-risk, under-resourced neighborhood in Austin. They bought several houses around them so that impoverished single moms could have transitional housing. He and his wife started a Missional Community whose purpose is to serve these single mothers, disciple and train these women, and to give these women hope.

They're not just engaging in social justice or charity. They're engaging in community development in their neighborhood,

and they are changing the world. They're seeing people come to Christ. They're making a difference in the city of Austin.

If we had never challenged them, if we had never raised the bar for them, and if we'd never released him, if we'd never given him permissionâ€¦"it's okay for you to use your finances, your time, and your giftings outside of the four walls of this church," there's a really good chance this family spends the rest of their lives sitting in a chair in our sanctuary listening to sermons, singing songs, passing the offering plate, never knowing the thrill of giving their life away for Jesus Christ.

People are hungrier than you could ever dream to get in the fight. Challenge them, train them, and release them not just to come to church but to be the church.

What Do These Missional Communities Do?

Missional communities will vary across contexts, but they must be rooted in gospel; identity first, then methods and theory. What we've found is that if Christians love the gospel, they'll be willing to do incredible things for the sake of making Jesus known to those around them. At The Austin Stone, we are playing this out in both groups from traditional bible studies and groups being launched as missionary teams into the harvest.

Our methods come from our ultimate aim of conformity to the life of Jesus, not necessarily to a certain pattern or formula for Christian living. Our target in sanctification must be determined by our Christology – basically, "What is Jesus like?" Traditional American piety typically aims at developing the

inner life and leaving the outer life to church events. We're trying to lead our MCs to grow both inwardly and outwardly *as a group*.

As we look at Scripture and also at how our people are wired, we've conceived of a few simple practices that have been especially helpful for groups that are transitioning from a Bible study or small group mentality. Each is an expression of what a MC should be doing in the natural rhythms of life.

For the outward focus of our groups (the *missional* part of missional community), there are two primary practices we suggest:

- Regularly engaging in a **3rd Place**, somewhere neutral and natural that your group regularly gathers to enjoy each other and cultivate what Hugh Halter calls "inclusive community."
- Seeking opportunities for **Service**, which happens when groups seek opportunities to meet the needs of and bless people in their pocket of town or around the city. In other words, serving the least of these.

As we engage one another in these places, we prayerfully and intentionally start inviting our lost friends to join us and provide space for them to belong before they believe. In this way, the community apologetic is beginning to be lived out through creating a natural place where those outside the community of faith can meaningfully experience the life of Christ lived out amongst those who believe in Christ.

For the inward focus of our groups (the *community* part of missional community), there are two primary things we ask of our groups:

- Rather than depending on professionals, we want groups **pastoring each other** in the mess of life. This is really just a function of believers on mission living *more life together*. Depending on the situation, we may need to comfort, rebuke, encourage, forgive, etc. This isn't always easy, but we see the gospel on display as group members begin to die to self and love each other more.
- Finally, we're often asked the question "where do I go deep?" **LTG's** (Life Transformation Groups) are something you'll recognize from Neil Cole. LTG's are groups of 2 or 3 people committed to confession, Scripture, and praying for lost friends. This is the place for important high-bar personal depth, and accountability to discipleship that is based on our obedience, not simply growth in knowledge.

Finally, we value a regular **Missional Community Meeting** that serves both the outward and inward depth. It's a time for the group to share a meal together and hold a "low-bar" – no minimum amount of Bible or theology required to participate in meaningful discussion–Bible study. We hope that the relationships we cultivate with those far from God would make this their next step with us toward consistent engagement with the life of our community.

As we have begun to live these practices out, we become more convinced there is no magic formula. These are simply tools for groups to use, not to measure themselves by. We have seen, however, that as these practices are adopted within groups, the mission will enrich the community and the community will reinforce the mission.

Training Leaders in Context

We've changed how we're training and discipling our leaders. We've taught them, and we're teaching them, to be self-feeders versus consumers only. We're teaching them how to be self-feeders versus consumers because today in most churches, if you're a typical American Christian, it's pretty cool and it's totally okay for you to just come to a Bible study and just sit there and learn by consuming.

You can go on for years like that, but if you're going to be, say, a missionary in the Sudan, you better have made a transition in your life from just being a person sitting there and consuming someone else's teaching. You better be able to get into the Word of God and let the Word of God speak to you through the Holy Spirit and make that transition into your life from a person who is just hearing somebody else preach to a person who is a self-feeder and putting that stuff into action. So long story short, what we're doing is we're training our people like missionaries.



Matt Carter serves as the Pastor of Preaching and Vision at The Austin Stone Community Church, which has been tremendously

blessed since the church began in 2002. Matt's desire to see the church become an advocate for the welfare of the city of Austin has led to the creation of a network that exists to actively pursue the redemption and renewal of the city for the advancement of the Gospel. The For the City Network provides a platform for organizational collaboration by providing physical space to local non-profits as well as creating a funnel for volunteer engagement. In addition to pastoring at The Austin Stone, Matt is a cancer survivor, co-author of the book For the City, co-author of The Real Win with Colt McCoy, and speaker for camps and conferences nationwide. Twitter: [@_matt_carter](#).



TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

JASON DUKES

Start with a commitment to consistently live the ways of Jesus together while you converse around **four bottom-line questions** for the purpose of drawing some transformational conclusions.

One, what did the Head of the church intend for the ones He called “church?”

Two, who is church?

Three, why is church?

Four, where is church?

Jesus made His intention clear: “As the Father has sent Me, **so I am sending you**” (John 20:21). The church is a **people** unified-around-Jesus, sent-by-Jesus, and committed-to-live-the-ways-of-Jesus-with-each-other-and-among-the-lost. They exist for the purpose of cultivating and living out the **Gospel** of reconciliation everyday to the ends of the earth in hopes of

seeing “on earth as it is in heaven.”

“To the ends of the earth” implies more than just the nations abroad. It includes how the church exists in the **everyday** in homes, in neighborhoods, in the marketplace, throughout our cities, and around the world.

The conclusions that those missional community leaders-in-training reach through these conversations will determine what they cultivate into the missional community they lead and therefore have influence on what blossoms within and out of their missional community.

Next, converse about those four questions **over time** through the course of a season or two or three or four (as the Spirit leads), and don’t quickly draw conclusions. See the conclusions happen pragmatically among you. Don’t let them remain as hypotheses or ideology, for philosophical conclusions alone have a tendency of stagnating in the head instead of resulting in the daily.

The conversation that will center around those questions will not happen in a two-hour session. Rather, it must occur as the trainer is doing life with the trainees, over time, over coffee, amidst their various spheres of influence, through ups and downs, **together**.

The goal is that the trainees will model this life-together style with those people they disciple (aka, learn and live the ways of Jesus with). And then those they disciples will model it with those they disciple. And then those they disciple...well, you get the cyclical picture.

Finally, here are 4 ways to be intentional:

1. PRAY, but not that someone else might change or that your city might change. Pray to be cultivators of change who seek God's Spirit to grant them wisdom on specific ways to love their spouses, neighbors, co-workers, cities, and world.

2. CONNECT, but not just with one another and not just by inviting "the lost" to a "church gathering" or to a "church event" that you plan. Rather, connect over real life and common interests so that others can connect with you. Then, the trainer can coach the trainees as they talk with and walk with others in the midst of real life.

3. SERVE together, at least one way locally and one way globally, obviously along with the ways you each are serving the people you encounter in the daily. As you serve together, you will be able to invite "the lost" to serve with you. This is an engaging way for them to experience the ways of Jesus alive in you as they have already experienced through the way that you are their friend.

4. As they see this in the everyday and as they witness the beyond-self purposes of your life, they will begin to **LEARN AND LIVE THE WAYS OF JESUS** with you (aka be made to be disciples).

If that happens, then Missional Community leaders will have been trained, solely based upon the fact that new Missional Communities will have blossomed right in front of you in the middle of life together between trainer and trainees. Then, release and repeat.



Jason Dukes has been married to his beautiful wife, Jennifer, for 12 years. They have five amazing kids - Caleb, Katey, Abby, Ella, and Noah. Jason serves on leadership team with a local expression of the church his wife and he helped to start in February 2004 called Westpoint Church – a people who are being the church together in the Winter Garden, FL area. Along with the Westpoint team, Jason helped start House Blend Cafe, the Reproducing Churches Network, the Church of West Orange, and the online cause site Humanity Beautiful. He wrote the book LIVE SENT: you are a letter, published in September 2009 with a 2nd edition to be released in April 2011. You can follow Jason on twitter via @JasonCDukes or read his blog at JasonCDukes.com.



PROCESS, NOT PROGRAM

JR WOODWARD

Cultivating a Discipleship Ethos

Developing and training leaders for missional communities begins with cultivating a discipleship ethos. We need to look at discipleship holistically, beginning with those who have yet to self-identify as Christians, and then all the way across the continuum to those who are serving the community from the overflow of their walk with God.

Often the best leaders for missional communities are those who have yet to become Christ followers, the people of peace that God connects us with as we live our mission day to day. Robert Webber in *Journey to Jesus* explores *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, which was penned around 215 A.D., as the church was connecting with a world unfamiliar with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. From this document, we learn the church developed a holistic approach to discipleship at every stage of development. They identified four specific phases of development from the *seeker* to the *hearer* to the *kneeler* to the *faithful*.

Their discipleship began with those who had no faith - the *seeker*, and continued toward those who were using their gifts and talents to continue the mission - the *faithful*. When it comes to training and developing leaders, I have adapted this pre-modern paradigm to our postmodern, post-Christendom context, through the lens of

the five equippers that the Apostle Paul mentions in his letter to Ephesus. Here is the basic discipleship continuum that we use.

Developmental Phase	Description
Resister	Those who are adversarial toward the church or the Christian faith.
Skeptic	Those who are skeptical of the church or the Christian faith.
Seeker	Those who are consciously or unconsciously open to God and willing to engage in meaningful discussions of faith.
Hearer	Those who self-identify as Christian. This would be the point of conversion.
Kneeler	Young Christians who are growing in their understanding of the new identity in Christ and the basics of the faith.
Faithful	Those who are active members of the missional community who understand and use their gifts and talents to bless others.
Servant	Those who are a core part of the missional community, leading or apprenticing a ministry in the community.

© JR Woodward 2008

A Process, Not a Program

Within this holistic approach to discipleship, when it comes to discipling or training the servant(s), we take an Orient, Involve and Equip approach. In other words, training missional community leaders is a process, not a program, and it takes place within the context of engaging in God’s mission. Discipleship takes place when we are “with people” like Jesus was with the 12, and it becomes personal and powerful in the informal daily rhythms of life. It’s about being vulnerable, and being open about our brokenness.

Discipleship is learning to call out what the Holy Spirit has put in people. It involves ministering together, praying together and studying the scriptures together. It is about encouraging, comforting and challenging one another. Discipleship takes place communally – in our personal space (4 to 12 people) as well as one-on-one.

It is about reflecting and refocusing. It's learning to ask the right questions, and taking the time to listen to what God is doing in the person and through the person. It is walking beside them as they develop practical assignments (with deadlines), for further growth based on what God is doing. Training involves resourcing people theologically and practically so they can embody the good news contextually in every area of their lives.

It's about being with and for people in hard times, praying for and with them, and falling in love with Jesus all over again. Training takes place more often in the living room and the streets, than in the classroom and the sanctuary. Training is ultimately about helping people follow Jesus in the concrete realities of life, for the sake of the people group or neighborhood to whom you are seeking to bring God's blessing.



***JR Woodward** is a dream awakener and co-founder of Kairos Los Angeles, a network of neighborhood churches in the Los Angeles area. He serves on the East Hollywood Neighborhood Council as well as on the board for the Ecclesia Network and GCM. He founded [nlcf] a church at Virginia Tech, and The Unembraced, a ministry to orphans in the Turkana region of Kenya. He is also the co-founder*

and director of The Solis Foundation that awards micro-grants to help start small businesses in Kenya. JR enjoys coaching and consulting with a number of churches and church planters. Twitter: [@dreamawakener](#).



Also, check out these other
FREE eBooks
from Verge Network:



www.vergenetwork.org/ebooks