

Missional church leadership

Lecturer: Dr Steve Taylor

Missional church

is not about programs and projects but about the gathering of people concerned with God's purpose into the wider community. Participants will explore the Biblical paradigms, skills, imaginations and capacities required to lead a missional church. The course is heavily focused on ministry contexts and deliberately designed to suit people in ministry.

1. What, in a nutshell, is the missional church leadership course?

Mission in Western cultures is a continuing challenge. This course will explore that challenge with particular reference to the local church's participation in what the Spirit is doing in and for the life of the world through Jesus Christ. Ideally pedagogy should reflect content. This suggests that teaching a course regarding the missional church requires:

- Focus on local context, with particular attention to lived experiences among the people of God as a primary location for theological reflection
- A learning community for encouragement, focus and accountability
- Learning together around a set of missional practices
- Integrating wider reflection on God's mission
- A focus on clarifying missional action projects

2. So how does this happen?

The course will be taught over an entire year. It will include a (3 hour) monthly (10 times) gathering for learning, encouragement and accountability. Participants will gather around teaching, plus a defined set of missional church practices including

- Dwelling in the Word – discerning Scripture
- Listening and storytelling engagement –discerning our context and our action plans

Participants are also required to be engaged in a context (broadly defined as a place that a participant can regularly return to, listen among and in which they could start to imagine God's future. It could include a work place, a community ministry, a local café or a recognized church ministry.)

Alongside monthly gatherings and a context, participants follow a regular guided on-line reading. This is just as significant as the monthly gathering, and is designed so a person can read in context, rather than in a classroom. It is recommended participants diary a block of time for this reading.

3. So what is covered in the course?

Day 1 Jesus sent them: Introducing a missional church and a missional theology. Luke 10:1-12.

Day 2 Do not take a purse: The spirituality of a missional leader

Day 3 Eating and drinking: Dwelling and discerning local narratives: mapping your landscape

Day 4 If the head of the house loves peace: Finding God in the Other. Hear local narratives # 1

Day 5 A local narrative: Case study: Dwelling and discerning a local narrative

Day 6 Stay there: Change processes: Hear local narratives # 2

Day 8 The Kingdom of God has come near: Discerning local narratives. Hear local narratives # 3.

Day 7 Eat what is set before you: The missional church: worship: texting. Hear local narratives # 4

Day 9 Missional leader imaginations, skills and capacities: Hear local narratives # 5.

Day 10 The Kingdom as near. Provisional nature of the missional church. Hear local narratives # 6.

4. I presume that some work is involved?

The course has been designed to enhance processes of learning around missional church and/or for participants to test ideas within a supportive group before facing a ministry context. This is the heart of this course: a desire to create both a safe and accountable space for group leaning and with missional coaching.

All participants are expected to engage in the following ways.

- a) Monthly reading reflections:** 2000 words (9 readings + 1 “cultural field trip day” (Waitangi Day); 200 word response to each reading). Each month students will read;
- 1 chapter from course text: *The Missional Leader*, Roxburgh and Romanuck
 - 1 chapter/article (your choice) from annotated bibliography or supplied material.

Students will be required to engage with these readings in an on-line community, addressing the following;

- one theological metaphor from this reading that resonates with you and why it resonates
- how this metaphor relates to your context (encourage or challenge)

A class tutor will respond (within 48 hours) to your 200 word response, offering critical feedback and engagement. This is designed to keep you in context. In other words, you read not for class, but for your missional context. At the same time, the use of on-line community and tutor engagement is designed to encourage you and give you a sense of being part of a learning community even while engaged locally.

- b) Listening in context assessment:** 2000 words. Due day 6

Students will be presented with a number of ways to read local narratives. These include history, everyday practices, cultural exegesis, geographic and symbolic. They will use these techniques to offer a reading of their local context, discerning the narratives that are shaping people’s lives. It is hoped that participants might want to present their context to the class, thus gaining wider group interaction. Perhaps classes could move around participants various context (where practical).

- c) Missional leadership action project:** 2000 words. Due Day 9.

Each participant will imagine a missional project that could embody God’s missional dreams for their context. The project will need to demonstrate connectivity to their context and articulate a missional theology. Participants are not expected to put the project into practice (although the assessment is deliberately designed for usefulness within your context). As above, I hope that by this stage of the course, students might want to present their missional project to the class, and where practical, in context.

5. So how much time exactly is involved?

Monthly gathering	30 hours	Reading and reflections	50 hours
Listening assignment	35 hours	Missional action project	35 hours
	TOTAL		150 hours

6. And some details?

Lecture dates: 9 gatherings; (to avoid Christmas and Easter) early October 07, late October 07, late November 07, late January 08, early March 08, early May 08, early June 08, early July 08, early August 08. **Plus** a 10th class that is not together but invites people to individually attend Waitangi Day celebrations and reflect on the narratives at work. **Course costs:** \$600. Course can be taught in a variety of locations in New Zealand and over a variety of dates, including mid-year starts. Ideal size is a group on not less than 10 and not more than 15. For more information, including a 6 minute video explanation of the course, contact steve@emergentkiwi.org.nz

7. Who is Steve Taylor?



Drinker of coffee, husband to Lynne and father to Shannon and Kayli Anne. His interest lies in the interface between church and society. This included PhD study on how churches are responding to cultural change.

Steve teaches at Bible College of New Zealand (Christchurch) in areas like Being Kiwi and Being Christian and Emerging and Missional Church.

Following the planting of an emerging church called Graceway, Steve became a change agent pastor at Opawa Baptist Church, working with a established congregation with a long history and together exploring what it means to be the church in our world today. He leds a team of 7, all part-time, which keeps them focused on life outside the church. As a church they have placed Christmas presents as interactive art in the centre of Christchurch city, planted a cafe congregation and a hymn congregation, run "Take a Kid to faith" church services and taught spiritual journalling in a local cafe. If you want to know still more about Steve, you could check out his book, *The Out Bounds Church? Learning to Create a Community of Faith in a Culture of Change* (Zondervan, 2005) or follow his on-line journal at www.emergentkiwi.org.nz.