

## How to Train Missional Community Leaders

Verge Network interviews Dave Ferguson: adapted transcription

I think this 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. (Click here to see Dave's article on re-defining 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.

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 a lot of places is this last part of *reproducing*.

So, after a while, Kirsten and her family lived in one of our affluent suburbs in Chicago. She and her husband really felt a call to the poor, so he quit his corporate job, and went back to school. They relocated 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.

There's a place in Luke where it talks about how Jesus spent his time rubbing off on His disciples, and that's what Kirsten did with Bob. 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.

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.