

Vancouver School of Theology
SAH-PT5/733:
I Come to the Garden Alone?
Church Planting in Post-Christendom
July 13-17, 2020: 2pm – 5pm

“The Church is planted like the Garden of Eden in the world.”
- *Irenaeus of Lyons*

Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart
St. Andrew's Hall, 2nd Floor
604.827.2097
rlockhart@standrews.edu

Purpose:

In the (formerly) mainline Protestant churches, there is no maintenance ministry left. Congregational ministry today requires either revitalization or church planting. This course helps students who wish to focus upon the planting of new witnessing communities of Christian faith. It builds upon the biblical and theological exposition of the *Missio Dei* and examines the purpose and role of the witnessing community in that mission. Assigned readings serve as resources for both the theological foundations and the envisioned practices of church planting. Particular attention is given to the integration of experience, theory and practice.

Competence Objectives:

Students will:

1. *describe and discuss* the challenges of church planting in a post-Christian context of Canada today, with a special focus on Cascadia;
2. *identify* the attitudes, habits and character needed for church planting ministries today, defining the ministerial gifts and capacity required to work synergistically in a team;
3. *analyze and evaluate* different church planting models in use within the broader Cascadian context;
4. *demonstrate* conscientiousness and a willingness to take personal responsibility for learning, honesty and personal integrity in leadership.

Format:

All courses offered in VST 2020 Summer School will only be available through distance learning, using Zoom for class sessions and Canvas, VST's online course platform, for course resources. All classes will be recorded on Zoom for password protected viewing by class participants only.

Zoom software requires minimum computer system requirements such as an internet connection – broadband wired or wireless, a camera and a microphone. For details please refer to <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-Requirements-for-PC-Mac-and-Linux>. Students unfamiliar with Zoom will be provided basic support by VST. For reference see <https://vst.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Zoom-Manual-for-Students.pdf>. Students will also be provided with basic support for accessing Canvas.

Work in the course consists of daily 3-hour Zoom classes from 2 to 5 pm, July 13 to 17, 2020. The primary format will be lecture and in class discussion based on the reading of the assigned texts. Local church planters will join the class as guest speakers to help students gain a fulsome understanding of the challenges and opportunities of church planting in Cascadia today. All courses also include required readings to be completed before the course starts. As well various assignments may include papers or exercises during the week, and one or more final papers due by August 31 for Certificate and Basic Degree students. All papers will be submitted to the instructor via email or as the instructor specifies.

Required Texts:

Students should order the required reading online as ebooks or hardcopy using sites like Amazon, etc. If ordering hardcopies of texts, please allow sufficient time for delivery prior to the start of class.

Heath, Elaine. *Missional. Monastic. Mainline: A Guide to Starting Missional Micro-Communities in Mainline Churches*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2014.

James, Christopher. *Church Planting in Post-Christian Soil: Theology and Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Paas, Stephen. *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.

Pouteau, Preston. *The Bees of Rainbow Falls: Finding Faith, Imagination and Delight in your Neighbourhood*. Portland: Urban Loft, 2017.

Scott, Emily. *For All Who Hunger: Searching for Communion in a Shattered World*. New York: Random House, 2020.

Expectations and Assignments

1. Class Participation

- Attendance: All students taking the course for Certificate or Degree credit must participate synchronously in all class sessions via Zoom. Auditors are

encouraged to participate synchronously, but may request to watch class recordings asynchronously. 100% attendance is required of Certificate and Degree students.

- Readings: All students including auditors are expected to do all the required readings.
- Class participation: All synchronously participating students are expected to participate in all class discussions and activities. These will be set up via the Zoom technology.

2. Assignments

- Certificate students: Certificate students are required to hand in 5-6 pages of writing that demonstrates the ability to thoughtfully engage the material and reading for the class and gives a personal reflection on the reading and material covered.
- **Research Paper** Students will identify and investigate a church planted (preferably in Cascadia) in the last ten years, in order to prepare an essay of 6 to 8 pages (Basic Degree or 15-17 pages Advanced Degree) addressing these themes: (a) The understanding of God's mission that implicitly or explicitly undergirds the endeavor; (b) The role of Scripture in the witnessing community's development and formation; (c) The particularities of the context and the challenges or opportunities it presents for Christian witness; (d) The process of catechesis and discipleship development in participants and challenges of the context; (e) The understanding and practice of leadership; (f) The self-understanding of the world outside of the church plant and how that impacts the community's approach to evangelism and justice; (g) Significant learnings discovered and best practices offered from the church plant to the wider church. This research can be conducted online, in person (attending worship services) or by making interview appointments with the leadership team. Papers will analyze these church plants in light of assigned course readings, lectures and in class discussions.
- **Deadlines:** Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus for each course. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.

Selected Bibliography

- Barrett, Lois, ed. *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns of Missional Faithfulness*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Beech, Lee. *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope After Christendom*. Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 2015.
- Block, Tina. *The Secular Northwest: Religion and Irreligion in Everyday Postwar Life*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016.

- Bosch, David. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991.
- Branson, Mark & Nicholas Warnes. *Starting Missional Churches: Life with God in the Neighborhood*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2014.
- Croft, Stephen. *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church*. London: Church House Publishing, 2008.
- Cronshaw and Hammond, *Sentness: Six Postures of Missional Christians*. Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 2014.
- Van Gelder, Craig. *The Ministry of the Missional Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007.
- Goheen, Michael. *Reading the Bible Missionally*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.
- Gorman, Michael. *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation and Mission*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.
- Guder, Darrell. *The Incarnation and the Church's Witness*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005.
- Guder, Darrell, ed. *Missional Church: A vision for the sending of the church in North America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Hastings, Ross. *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-Evangelizing the West*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2012.
- Hersch, Patricia. *A Tribe Apart: A Journey into the Heart of American Adolescence*. New York: Random House, 1998.
- Lockhart, Ross A. *Beyond Snakes and Shamrocks: St. Patrick's Missional Leadership for Today*. Eugene: Cascade, 2018.
- Lockhart, Ross A. *Lessons from Laodicea: Missional Leadership in a Culture of Affluence*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Pentland, John. *Fishing Tips: How Curiosity Transformed a Community of Faith*. Toronto: UCRD, 2015.
- Roxburgh, Alan and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Read a Changing World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Roxburgh, Allan. *Structured for Mission*. Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 2015.
- Sparks, Paul. *The New Parish: How Neighborhood Churches Are Transforming Mission, Discipleship and Community*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2014.
- Tomberlin, Jim. *Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012.